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REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST

The Years of Revolution:

MEMOIRS AND PORTRAITS

OCTOBER 1964

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SURVEY

A Journal of Soviet and East European Studies

No. 53 **October 1964**

Editor: Walter Z. Laqueur **Associate Editor: Leo Labedz**

Antonio Gramsci ..... *Neil McInnes* 3

Moscow 1921 ..... *Bernhard Reichenbach* 16

Passage to Russia ..... *Esther Corey* 23

From Mexico to Moscow ..... *Manuel Gomez* 33

Rosa Luxemburg ..... *Peter Nettl* 48

Radek and the German Revolution, I ..... *H. Schurer* 59

Paul Levi and the Comintern ..... *Helmut Gruber* 70

The Marxism of Karl Korsch ..... *Paul Mattick* 86

In Memoriam—Alfred Rosmer ..... *Gustave Stern* 98

Pokrovsky and Russian History ..... *Roman Szporluk* 107

Raskolnikov ..... *Ex-Insider* 119

The Strange Case of Anna Louise Strong ..... *Philip Jaffe* 129

Palmiro Togliatti ..... *Aldo Garosci* 140

The Coming Storm ..... *A. Ascher* 148

Views and Reviews: Victor Frank: Maxim Gorky's correspondence —Pierre Forgues: Platonov—R. Milner-Gulland: Den Poezii— Rosalyn Higgins: USSR and UN—Derek Scott: Government and Politics—Evelyn Anderson: Industry in East Europe 165

Our Contributors 182

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JOURNAL OF POLITICS

The November, 1964 issue will contain:

Voters and Elections: Past and Present
by **Angus Campbell** 19

Metropolitan Areas and Congress: Foreign Policy and National Security
by **Murray Clark Havens** 28

Urban Politics: The New Convergence of Power
by **Robert H. Salisbury** 33

The Alabama Senatorial Election of 1962: Return of Inter-Party Competition
by **Walter Dean Burnham** 31

Traditional Role Performance and the Development of Modern Political Parties: The Indian Case
by **Myron Weiner** 21

On the Logical Analysis of Power-Attribution Procedures
by **Benjamin Walter** 35

Some Ways of Thinking About Equality
by **John H. Schaar** 39

A Critique of American Protestant Social and Political Thought
by **Douglas Stevens** 23

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ANTONIO GRAMSCI

Neil McInnes

THE contrast between the abundant publication of Antonio Gramsci's works in Italy and the scarcity of translations into other languages [1] is so striking that it has invited Machiavellian explanations. Ignazio Silone told the Parisian weekly *L'Express* several years ago that the political party that has custody of Gramsci's manuscripts had been urged by its sister-party in Russia to be prudent in publishing them, for they contained suspect matter. Specifically, said Silone, the Italian communists were given a 'licence' to print Gramsci in Italy, where his original variety of Marxism would be useful in bringing anarchists to communism, in return for an undertaking to restrict publication in other languages. That Gramsci's manuscripts are published in obedience to political considerations is evident even in Italy itself. The books printed under his name are, for the most part, selections, made according to principles that are not revealed, from a mass of material to which independent scholars do not have access. Where comparison is possible, as with the letters and newspaper articles, expurgation and arbitrary omissions have been alleged; and Gramsci's earliest writings, which some would have found embarrassing during the Stalinist era, were held ten years and published only after the 20th congress of the Soviet Communist Party. Scholars, already sufficiently hampered by the fact that Gramsci has become a political and ideological symbol and the object of a cult, have appealed to those who hold the keys to his work to allow a complete critical edition 'without censorship or prejudice'.[2]

These things are mentioned without polemical intent, simply as a warning of the limitations of any account of Gramsci's life and thought such as follows. For what could be the polemical intent? In Italy the usual one is to reclaim Gramsci from a political party that is exploiting his renown, by proving that he was really a less orthodox Leninist than is believed. But at a time when no one is agreed on the content of

1 In English there exists an anthology, Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and other writings* (London, 1957). In French there are Gramsci, *Lettres de la prison* (Paris, 1953), and *Le Matérialisme historique et la philosophie de Benedetto Croce* (Paris, 1948).

2 A. Caracciolo and G. Scalia, editors, *La Città futura: Saggi sulla figura e il pensiero di Antonio Gramsci* (Milan, 1959), p. 9 and passim.

Since this article was written, a new edition of Gramsci's works, containing hitherto unpublished material, has begun to appear in Italy under the title *2000 pagine di Gramsci*. Two volumes out of four have been published (June 1964): *Nel tempo della lotta 1914–1926* and *Lettere edite e inedite 1912–1937*. The former contains, among other unpublished matter, Gramsci's letter to the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party in 1926 urging moderation in the struggle against Trotsky, for the sake of proletarian unity. Gramsci's letter was first published in an Italian socialist periodical in 1938. Together with Togliatti's reply (sent from Moscow on 18 October, 1926), it has now been reproduced in the Italian communist weekly *Rinascita* (30 May, 1964). Some think it significant that this text, whose authenticity or very existence was long disputed, should be re-discovered just when Sino-Soviet differences seem to be approaching a critical point.

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'Leninism'—certainly not Moscow and Peking, nor the Khrushchevists and Stalinists inside other parties—this would be a vain task. Its only conclusion would be that Leninism and Gramscism have both become, in the course of ideological controversy, amorphous, polyvalent doctrines between which it is easy to stage 'battles of quotations'. Yet both definitely belong to the same tradition and there can be no thought of 'rescuing' Gramsci from the political party that has made him its intellectual standard-bearer. Indeed, for all the difficulties of elucidating his thought (we shall return to them in studying his *Prison Notebooks* after outlining his life and political career), it is plain that some of the most effective things in it are his defences of Lenin from the anti-Bolshevik Marxists.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI[3] was born in Ales (Sardinia) in 1891, one of the seven children of a modest clerk. His childhood in that extremely backward island was poor but not unhappy, though he started work (10 hours a day) at the age of 11 and always suffered indifferent health. He showed himself a scholar, and after secondary education in Sardinia he won a scholarship to the University of Turin in 1911. Living poorly on his bursary, supplemented by odd jobs, he distinguished himself in the faculty of letters as a brilliant student of linguistics and philology. More important, the big industrial city brought him into touch with the socialist movement, and while still an undergraduate he joined the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and wrote in the local socialist press. By 1914 his choice was made and, to the despair of his professors, he abandoned an assured academic career to become a 'professional revolutionary'. That meant, at first, editing a Turin socialist weekly, *Grido del Popolo,* which was to be closely associated with the factory council movement in that city. After the collapse of the five-day armed insurrection of the Turin workers in August 1917, Gramsci was elected secretary of the Turin section of the PSI.[4]

The party was soon to be rent by the division of the Second International, and Gramsci espoused Lenin's cause, as far as he could then have understood it: Lenin's theoretical works were not yet translated and Gramsci saw the soviets through the veil of his experience with the Turin *consigli di fabbrica* or factory councils. From May 1919 these latter found a new organ in the daily *L'Ordine Nuovo,* which Gramsci joined as an editorialist along with his fellow-student Palmiro Togliatti.[5] During and after the May 1920 general strike that paper represented the Third International opposition inside the PSI. It printed the Turin section's 'Programme', which Gramsci seems to have drafted and which

[3] On Gramsci's life, the official view (which includes a measure of hagiography and propaganda) will be found in Togliatti, *Gramsci* (Milan, 1949), and in L. Lombardo-Radice and G. Carbone, *Vita di Antonio Gramsci* (Rome, 1951).

[4] For this period see E. Avidgor, 'Il movimento operaio torinese durante la prima guerra mondiale', in *La Città futura, op. cit.*

[5] Cf. J. McKay Gammett, *Antonio Gramsci and the 'Ordine Nuovo' Movement: A study in the rise of Italian Communism* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1960).

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Lenin explicitly approved. The inevitable split came at the Leghorn conference of the PSI in January 1921. The official history has it that Gramsci led the opposition out of the PSI and thus founded the Italian Communist Party, but there is evidence that he was unenthusiastic about the formation of a new political party, preferring to place all his revolutionary hopes in direct action by the factory councils. 'The Italian state', he wrote at this time, 'must be decapitated in Milan, not Rome, because the real capitalist governing apparatus is not in Rome but Milan . . . Rome has no function in Italian social life; it represents nothing and will submit to the hard laws of the workers' state against parasites'. These opinions were regarded as 'syndicalism' and 'economism' by some of his companions, whom Gramsci in turn suspected of 'Blanquism' because they identified the dictatorship of the proletariat with the dictatorship of a party. Such differences are nowadays described as mere nuances by Togliatti, and indeed they did not prevent Gramsci playing a leading role in the new party. It was, however, an oppositional role at first: Gramsci criticised the first secretary, Bordiga, who held that the Communist Party was the principal, if not the sole, force capable of standing against fascism. Gramsci called this attitude sectarian, demanded a broad alliance of anti-fascist elements, and continued to argue that workers' and peasants' committees were the real expression of the socialist movement; the Communist Party could develop only in a parallel course with such autonomous proletarian institutions. This latter notion caused some embarrassment in the Third International when it was asked to referee the dispute, as may be seen in the ambiguous Theses of the fifth congress in Moscow in 1924: on the one hand, the development of workers' soviets is declared, in general, impossible 'before the revolution', while on the other hand, in a special recommendation to the Italian party, the factory councils are warmly approved.[6] The whole affair is obscure because one must rely on party sources, to a large extent, and Bordiga's and Gramsci's positions have inevitably been re-interpreted in the light of later events.

MEANTIME, Gramsci had been sent to Moscow in 1922 as the Italian delegate to the International. During a year's stay there he met all the Bolshevik leaders and, incidentally, married. In 1923 he watched developments in Italy from Vienna, and on returning home was elected secretary of the CPI and, in the April 1924 elections, communist deputy. As chief of the party, he founded *L'Unità*, conducted the struggle against fascism, led the opposition out of parliament after the assassination of the Socialist deputy Matteotti, and back in again when the attempt to found an 'anti-parliament' failed. All his efforts to form an anti-fascist coalition, either in or out of parliament, came to nothing and his proposal for a general strike was rejected. Mussolini's 'laws

[6] Cf. A. Caracciolo, 'Serrati, Bordiga e la polemica gramsciana contro il "blanquismo" o settarismo di partito', in *La Città futura*.

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of exception' were introduced and Gramsci was arrested under them in November 1926. At his trial in May-June 1928 the prosecutor asked for a sentence that would 'stop that brain working for 20 years'. Gramsci was condemned to twenty years four months and five days imprisonment.

In truth, that brain could not be stopped working even by the inhuman conditions of fascist jails, which told sorely on a frail constitution. Soon after his arrest Gramsci calmly planned an immense labour of research and meditation, and went on to execute part of it in an achievement that has few equals for tenacity and sheer intellectual heroism. Between 1929 and 1935 he filled 32 notebooks (almost 3,000 pages of minute handwriting, the equivalent of 4,000 typed pages) with notes and essays on politics, philosophy, and literature. All of it was subject to prison censorship and anything subversive enough to strike a fascist jailer would have led to interruption of the trickle of books and papers that kept Gramsci in touch with the outside world. Two serious breakdowns in 1931 and 1933 brought him to death's door, and by 1936 he was utterly exhausted; deliberate ill-treatment appears to have played a role. He died in April 1937 in a Roman clinic a few days after his term, commuted by various concessions, had expired. He had lived 46 years, 11 of them in jail.

The Prison Notebooks, from which editors have extracted most of the published works by grouping passages on related subjects,[7] are certainly the most important part of his achievement, but it is useful to look first at his journalism in the *Grido del Popolo* and *L'Ordine Nuovo*.[8] It is not all political, as against the cultural interests that predominate in the Notebooks: Gramsci was an adept of Crocean idealism from 1917, he kept up his linguistic studies during his political activities, and as drama critic of *Avanti!* in 1919–20 he was already working out a theory of 'national-popular literature' that he developed further in prison. Yet the main interest here is naturally Gramsci's reaction to the Bolshevik Revolution, and his participation in the Italian socialist movement's affairs between then and its liquidation by Mussolini.

Grido del Popolo: One of his first articles, published early in the war, supported Mussolini's doctrine of 'active neutrality', the first step towards Italy's entry into the war on the side of the Allies. This was a false start, and Gramsci was silent for a year before re-appearing as a partisan of the contrary Zimmerwald line. His youthful political options are less significant than his early concern for the 'spiritual conditions'

[7] The books thus compiled, and published by Einaudi (Turin), are *Il materialismo storico e la filosofia di Benedetto Croce* (1948), *Gli intellettuali e l'organizzazione della cultura* (1949), *Il Risorgimento* (1949), *Note sul Machiavelli, sulla politica e sullo stato moderno* (1949) and *Passato e presente* (1951). In addition, *Letteratura e vita nazionale* (1950) contains extracts from the Notebooks as well as drama reviews published in *Avanti!*

[8] Gramsci, *Scritti giovanili* (Turin, 1958). Most, but not all, of his articles are published in *L'Ordine Nuovo 1919–20* (Turin, 1954). There is a selection of the main ones in *Antologia popolare degli scritti e delle lettere di Antonio Gramsci* (Rome, 1957).

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of a proletarian revolution, for this was to be an abiding interest. He wrote in January 1916: 'Every revolution has been preceded by an intense labour of criticism, of cultural penetration, of permeation of ideas through groups of men initially refractory and engrossed with solving day by day, hour by hour their own political and economic problem'. It had been thus with the French Revolution and it would be thus again with socialism. The conception of revolution as, in the first place and above all, cultural preparation, entailed no concession to democratic reformist doctrine because, Gramsci argued, 'the socialist state . . . does not continue the bourgeois state; it is not an evolution from the capitalist state . . . but continues and develops systematically the professional organisations and local bodies that the proletariat has been able to generate spontaneously during the individualist regime'.

The Bolshevik Revolution when it came was, patently, no more in accord with this Sorelian schema than with orthodox social-democratic Marxism, but Gramsci hesitated no longer than Sorel did: the Russian Revolution was right and all the Marxist theorists were wrong. It was a revolution 'against Karl Marx's *Capital*', or at least against the mechanical interpretation of Marxism given by such as Kautsky. As for its no less evident inconsistency with Gramsci's own theory of revolution (for a determined minority played a greater role in Russia than any cultural preparation of the masses), Gramsci admitted that it was an 'exception', due to the 'peculiar circumstances' in Russia. But the workers' soviets would soon re-establish the rights of proletarian spontaneity against the dictatorship of a minority.

L'Ordine Nuovo: These reservations about Leninism are attenuated in the immediate postwar years (to re-appear in the Prison Notebooks), but Gramsci's notion of socialism remains intact: it means a free, democratic, decentralised society based on the autonomy of the producers' own institutions. Because the situation in Italy, as in the rest of Europe, is ripe for revolution, Bolshevik tactics can and must be used. Yet they cannot be the whole of revolutionary action. They are to be deployed in step with the growth of specifically proletarian organisations, such as the *consigli di fabbrica*. The political party and the trade union are typical creations of the liberal-bourgeois period and cannot characterise the new proletarian society. They are 'agents', and however crucial their role at revolutionary moments, the 'principal' remains the proletariat's own, original political creation: the system of workers' and peasants' institutions which alone are capable of replacing the democratic, parliamentary state. 'The class struggle, in the present period of capitalist industry's history, realises itself in a new type of proletarian organisation which is based on the factory and not on the craft, on the unit of production and not on the trade unions born of the division of labour. This new type of organisation . . . arises on the job, it sticks closely to the process of industrial production, its functions have to do with the job,

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in it the economy and politics meet, in it the exercise of sovereignty is one with the act of production '.[9]

It is clear that while unreservedly accepting Leninism, Gramsci is putting it in a wider context, just as Sorel was doing at that time.[10] What that context was has already been glimpsed in his earlier articles, and the matter will be worked out in his prison notes. Meantime, his position seemed ambiguous, and would become more so as the CPI was 'bolshevised' in the period 1924–26, as the soviets disappeared as a live force in Russia, and as Stalin's conception of an omnipotent party leadership emerged. By then Gramsci was performing constant mental acrobatics on the question of the party's relations with the factory councils. His confusion makes it possible for Togliatti to deny today that he and Gramsci ever believed that the councils 'contained in themselves the solution to the problem of power, that is, of the conquest of power and the construction of a new state'. On the contrary, says Togliatti, the theory of spontaneous workers' institutions was meant to lead up to the consolidation of a party dictatorship. It would seem that the veteran communist leader is looking back across Stalinism and re-interpreting Gramsci's (and incidentally his own) ideas in that light. However precarious Gramsci's balancing of party and *consigli* may have been, his idea was explicit enough: sovereignty resides in the workers' native institutions formed at the place of work, and these are the embryo of the new state, whereas the party is an indispensable but dependent instrument—and one, moreover, ever threatened with bureaucratisation.

The Prison Notebooks: This recall of Gramsci's political ideas during his years of freedom may explain why the official presentation of his thought dwells relatively briefly on that part of his career (just long enough to emphasise that he was Italy's 'first Leninist' and 'the founder of the Communist Party'), and then passes to the books extracted from the prison notes. Here the outlines of Gramsci's politics are harder to grasp. Leaving aside the criteria on which the extracts may have been selected and grouped, there is the fact that Gramsci passes to a higher plane of abstraction. For one thing, he had to: he could not, without attracting his jailer's attention, refer to Marx, Engels, Marxism, or Lenin, so he denoted them by nicknames: Lenin became Ilic, Marxism 'the philosophy of praxis', Marx and Engels 'the first and second founders of that philosophy', etc. The disguise is often more impenetrable than mere nicknames: political forces show up as general ideas, partly because the necessity of subterfuge became the habit of talking

[9] From an article published in August 1919, but not included in the *Opere* book, *L'Ordine Nuovo*; cited by Caracciolo, *loc. cit.*, p. 96.

[10] See Sorel's January 1920 essay published as 'Ultime Meditazioni' in the Roman review *Nuova Antologia* in 1928 (vol. 262, pp. 289–307), and of which the present writer gave the original text (restoring the cuts made by the fascist editors of 1928) in 'Georges Sorel: Aperçu sur les Utopies, les Soviets et le Droit Nouveau', in *Etudes de Marxologie*, January 1962. Gramsci read Sorel's essay in jail and discusses it in *Materialismo storico*, pp. 105–111.

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indirectly, but partly for more profound reasons. The first of them seems to have been that Gramsci practised a sort of self-censorship, shrinking from identifying certain targets even under a disguise. Thus, 'some people' are accused of having debased and vulgarised Marxism, and if one thinks he means Lenin one cannot always prove it. Again, Bukharin is criticised for his mechanical Marxism but there is no sure sign that Gramsci realises that he is actually attacking Stalin's philosophical views. The second is that Gramsci had passed—and would have had to, even if he had remained at liberty—from political action to rumination on the causes of the defeat that revolution had everywhere suffered by the 1930s. So he is naturally led to taking a more general view of political affairs, to the extent that adversity and disillusion make us 'philosophical'. Thirdly, enforced leisure allowed him to resume the speculative enquiries that had interested him as a student.

As if this greater abstraction were not sufficient obstacle to a simple reading of Gramsci's work, there is the circumstance that it is fragmentary, inchoate. The jottings seldom attain the length of short essays, so, even after the re-arranging by the editors, his 'books' remain a mixture of argument, suggestions, book reviews, bright ideas *da vedere* (to be looked into) and sketches of vast research projects that read like the scholar's equivalent of the delicious menus composed by concentration-camp prisoners. Lest this be taken as belittling them, one hastens to add that on almost every page we have the precious sight of a free mind armed with considerable learning and inexhaustible curiosity ranging over most of the domain of modern culture. That this demonstration of intellectual enterprise should come from a sick man in jail (and that it should be accompanied, in his personal letters,[11] by evidence of a noble and generous character) is extremely touching, but it is still inadequate to sustain the claim commonly made in Italy that Gramsci made an important contribution to modern philosophy. However, the following account of his ideas may enable readers to judge for themselves.

SINCE those ideas are nowhere systematically exposed, it is hard to know where to begin, but one may well take as fundamental Gramsci's project (first formed in 1917) of writing an 'anti-Croce' that would be parallel to Marx's inversion of Hegelian idealism to produce the philosophy of dialectical materialism. 'It is necessary to practise on the philosophy of Croce the same reduction that [Marx and Engels] practised on the Hegelian philosophy. This is the only historically fruitful way of bringing about an adequate renovation of the philosophy of praxis [i.e. Marxism], of elevating that philosophy, which has been "vulgarised" for the immediate needs of practical life, to the level it must attain . . . [namely] the creation of a new integral culture which will have the mass-character of the Protestant Reform and the French Enlightenment as well as the classic character of Greek culture and the

11 *Lettere dal carcere* (Turin, 1947).

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Italian Renascence, a culture that will, in Carducci's words, synthesise Maximilian Robespierre and Immanuel Kant, politics and philosophy, in a dialectical unity. . . . For us Italians, to be the heirs of the classical German philosophy means being the heirs of the Crocean philosophy, which represents the modern, world version (*momento*) of the classical German philosophy'; and this fresh synthesis between Marxism and idealism will belong, not just to Italians, but 'to Europe and the world'.[12]

Disregarding the naive cultural nationalism that casts Italian neo-idealism for this universal role, one asks why any such synthesis is needful. Why should Marxism, which Gramsci's companions took to be a self-sufficient or even definitive philosophy, need a reinvigorating blood transfusion from idealism, Italian or other? Obviously because Gramsci felt that it had suffered a 'materialist' degeneration in his time, and that in three senses. Its official metaphysics had relapsed to a mechanical materialism (in Stalinism), rather of the sort that the Hegelian Marx had criticised a century before. Secondly, it had been given a narrowly political interpretation (in Leninism) to the neglect of the cultural, and especially ethical, factors in social change to which Sorel's theory of proletarian spontaneity had drawn attention. Thirdly, it had been simplified for the purposes of mass indoctrination, to win the support of a plebs whose intellectual capacity, or incapacity, reflected merely vulgar prejudice and naive realism.

This triple debasement was perfectly understandable, and Lenin was not to be castigated for his role in it, any more than Saint Paul could be castigated for having simplified Christ's message. Paul and Lenin stand for action, organisation and the diffusion of the ethic created by their masters, for its transposition into a social reality. The duality science-action is represented in the very name 'Marxism-Leninism', and we could similarly call Christianity 'Christism-Paulinism'.[13] Besides, Engels had been wrong in saying that Marx left the proletariat the secure 'heirs of the classical German philosophy'. Any such heritage is inevitably exposed to dissipation, especially in the conditions of political action. The reduction of idealism to a practical philosophy (which means, concurrently, the elevation of practice to a philosophical plane) is not a once-for-all affair, as Engels' phrase suggests, but a Vico-style cycle that needs to be repeated by each generation, at ever higher levels. The time had come, Gramsci felt, for a new fusion of political practice and speculative idealism, and it would take the form of an anti-Croce written by a Marxist.

For all the historical (or historicist) justification of Leninism as a necessary phase in Marxism's progress, it is clear that Gramsci feels about it the way a theologian does about simple-minded 'popular religion': it is the opium of the people. It is also evident that Gramsci is rejecting the doctrine drawn from the last Thesis on Feuerbach ('The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point

[12] *Materialismo storico*, pp. 199–120.
[13] Ibid. p. 76.

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however is to change it ') that philosophy culminates, once and for all and without residue, in revolutionary action. This had been taken to mean that proletarian action, endowed by Marx with all the philosophy it needed, had replaced philosophy, leaving no more room for mere speculation. On the contrary, said Gramsci, philosophy never culminates in the sense of ending, and men of action are never dispensed from reckoning with speculative idealism. Politics will always have a philosophical dimension, and revolution will always include cultural creativeness. In plainer terms, the simplification of revolutionary action, by (or at least since) Lenin, to the strategy and tactics of a minority intent on seizing power is a dangerous approach to the vast work of liberation, which must begin with a revolution of ideas, progress through the adoption of a new morality by the masses, and culminate in the social hegemony of that new ethic. The Leninist mistake is not to concentrate on installing a new state (whatever anarchists might say), but to fail to see that ' the foundation of a ruling class, that is, of a state, is equivalent to creating a new world-view ', that is to say ' a new intellectual and moral order '; so it is primarily a philosophical assignment.[14]

The ' conception of [Marxism] as a popular modern Reformation ', of revolution as the coming to hegemony of a new ethic, Gramsci explicitly draws from Sorel. In general, all his ethical theory and his philosophy of revolution, as far as it is reaction against, or reservations about, Leninism, comes from Sorel, who was certainly a major influence over Gramsci. His ' *maximalist* ' opponents had seen this from 1919 when they accused the *Ordine Nuovo* group of being ' neo-syndicalist, spontaneist, Bergsonian ',[15] and it is patent throughout the prison writings. Yet Gramsci is no Sorelian, in that he dissociates himself from the Frenchman's anti-intellectualism, anti-Jacobinism, and his ' Jansenist fury against the stupidities of parliamentarism and political parties '. For those are the things (the role of intellectuals, Jacobins, political parties) that Gramsci wants to synthesise into his political philosophy, which will combine Robespierre (i.e. Lenin) with Kant (i.e. Sorel). His insistence on the necessity of disciplined political action under party leadership, even for a revolutionary movement whose content is ethical and cultural, is among the most effective things he wrote. This is why Silone could say that, for all their anxieties about Gramsci's philosophy, the communists would find him invaluable, at least in Italy, in bringing anarchists, idealists, and romantics to see the need of party discipline.

LENIN'S and Trotsky's apologies for minority leadership and party discipline had been peremptory and polemical, and often came down to the local, historical argument, ' Russia is at war! ', which quite failed to convince Marxist opponents of bolshevism. Gramsci wanted to show

[14] Ibid. pp. 75 and 80–81. ' Hegemony ' is a key-word in Gramsci, implying opposition to ' dictatorship ' in the sense that cultural predominance can be distinguished from political power. When they coincide, that is revolution.

[15] *Passato e presente*, pp. 55–57.

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the general, theoretical necessity, in all revolutionary action, of the sort of political leadership Lenin had provided. On the one hand, he argued that anti-Jacobinism is at best an honest theoretical error in such as Sorel, but more often serves as the cover for a rival group's bid to displace existing leadership—for all movements have political leadership, none is really spontaneous in the sense of being unled. Anti-Jacobinism and rejection of Bolshevik discipline are pretexts for passivity, and thus well suit the ruling class. Besides, revolutionary movements will find their opportunity only at a moment of social breakdown, and if they do not then resort to Jacobin-Bolshevik tactics, the ground will be swept from under their feet by a right-wing counter-revolution, which is precisely the characteristic product of moments of social breakdown.

On the other hand, the political leadership that a Leninist party offers the working class is not Blanquism, an external, authoritarian discipline imposed on the movement. Rather, it is a directing, educating force, a specialised function of the movement itself; it is the movement become self-conscious, seeking to concentrate and make politically effective the morality that is diffuse in the workers' own spontaneous institutions, while remaining democratically responsive to the movement. There exists the evident danger, Gramsci concedes, that this instrument will be bureaucratised and lapse into a centralised 'Byzantine-Bonapartist' authority. (This was written as Stalin consolidated his power.) Yet that danger is less terrible than the menace of impulsiveness, fatuity, vanity, and arbitrariness that attends undisciplined initiative. Gramsci devoted much time to this definition of the party's role, to its relations with the class's native institutions and to the question of how far ahead of the masses it can go in trying to put their 'real' interests above their 'apparent' or short-term interests. In the end, all his formulations are unsatisfactory for those who do not share the faith in a 'dialectical' interplay between a central authority of political leaders and the aspirations of a mass movement, the confidence that the will of a minority of technicians of the *coup d'état* can regularly coincide with the ethical aims of a mass faith.

At least the context of the problem is clear: the party is the cutting edge of a movement that seeks to realise (make real) a new morality, to translate it from speculation into a way of living. This is the sense in which various philosophies (though not philosophy itself) can be said to culminate: 'There is a point of passage of every world-view into the morality that matches it, of every "contemplation" into the "action" that depends on it, and of every philosophy into the policy that depends on it . . . the point at which the world-view, the contemplation, the philosophy become "real" because they tend to change the world and to revolutionise practice. So you can say that this is the crux of the Marxist philosophy, the point at which it becomes actual, lives historically, that is socially, and no longer merely in individual minds, ceases to be arbitrary and becomes necessary-rational-real.' Moreover that 'point of passage' does not concern only sociologists, but philosophers

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too, because it constitutes the only test or 'proof' of a philosophy; there could be no other 'transcendental' criterion in Gramsci's absolute historicism. A philosophy that can, in this way, become effective historical reality is a true one. Croce had already said that philosophy was history, but Gramsci went further and specified that history was politics—so philosophy is politics. Robespierre was the 'implication' of Kant and, conversely, when Lenin seized power this was 'a metaphysical event'.[16] A philosophy cannot shrink from such 'implications', for by constitution it has a missionary spirit, it has to seek its proof by conquering mass support as a way of living. And at a crucial point in that effort it will need a Machiavellian Prince to incarnate the collective will that has opted for its morality.[17] The Marxist philosophy finds him today in that politician-philosopher, the Communist Party. 'The modern Prince, the myth-prince, cannot be a real person, a concrete individual; it can only be an organism; a complex element of society in which the cementing of a collective will, recognised and partially asserted in action, has already begun. This organism is already provided by historical development and it is the political party: the first cell containing the germs of collective will which are striving to become universal and total . . . the Jacobins . . . were certainly a "categoric incarnation" of Machiavelli's Prince . . . an example of how a collective will was formed and operated concretely, which in at least some of its aspects was an original creation, *ex novo*. It is necessary to define collective will, and political will in general, in the modern sense: will as working consciousness of historical necessity, as protagonist of a real and effective historical drama. One of the first parts [of a study of modern revolution] ought in fact to be dedicated to the "collective will", posing the question in this way: "When can the conditions for the arousing and development of a national-popular collective will be said to exist?" . . . The Modern Prince must, and cannot but, be the preacher and organiser of intellectual and moral reform, which means creating the basis for a later development of the national-popular collective will towards the realisation of a higher and total form of modern civilisation.'

THUS in this 'idealist' revision of Marxism, a social voluntarism replaces historical determinism. Economic factors are not overlooked but they are no longer autonomous; they appear among the conditions for the operation of collective will, and among the means it must use to renovate civilisation. In the notion of a Machiavellian political party that organises a moral and intellectual reform Gramsci considers that he has wedded Croce and Lenin, and combined Sorel's theory of spontaneous proletarian morality with Stalin's practice of party

16 *Materialismo Storico*, pp. 32, 41.

17 The interpretation of Machiavelli's *Prince* as a Sorelian myth symbolising the Italian people is to be found in the *Note sul Machiavelli*. The principal passages have been translated in *The Modern Prince*, op. cit., from which the following quotations are taken, pp. 137–139.

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dictatorship. Philosophers will hasten to point out that in these generous identifications of history, politics, and philosophy, it is philosophy that gets liquidated. We are left with, as the two constituents of culture, on the one hand, the existing mass ideology (religion, naive realism, materialism), and, on the other hand, the Machiavellian pedagogy of a party seeking to instal a different mass ideology. 'All is politics, even philosophy and philosophies, and the only "philosophy" is history in action, that is life itself.'[18] Of course, philosophy was bound to meet some such fate at the hands of an absolute historicist. Yet one must note the supreme irony that these things were written by a prisoner in Mussolini's jails, for what most resembles this 'idealist Marxism' is exactly fascism.[19] They may indeed be poles apart as social programmes, but on the philosophical ground that Gramsci has chosen they are the twin and contemporary products of a confusion of Marx, Sorel, Machiavelli, and Italian neo-idealism.

Gramsci's anti-Croce, then, is a rather different achievement from Marx's anti-Hegel. Croce, after all, had been a Marxist,[20] which is why Gramsci could say that his Marxism-idealism synthesis was at a 'higher level' or in a later cycle than Marx's own. Yet what Gramsci did was not so much to stand speculative idealism back on its feet as to recover its Marxist ingredients, taking them back complete with their idealist wrappings. It is understandable that communist theorists outside Italy should fear that, in the process, it is Marx that gets stood on his head. Their apprehensions are most justified in regard to Gramsci's endeavour to purge the Marxism of his day of all its 'crude materialism', 'naive realism', and 'positivist incrustations', i.e. to incorporate it into an absolute historicist idealism. Some warrant for this programme exists in Engels, though less surely in Marx. Indeed, Croce had complained that Marx was insufficiently historicist and showed 'residues of transcendence'. Gramsci made the same complaint about Croce, and offered to get rid of all transcendence and all objectivity in a socialist version of the most uncompromising Italian neo-idealism. So he argued that not only is all social thought historically relative (including Marxism itself, which thus is destined to be surpassed), but natural science is too (not excluding, it would appear, logic and mathematics). Science is part of the ideological superstructure and the 'nature' it claims to study is simply 'the category of the economic', that is, an incident in productive technology. 'Without the [economic] activity of man, the creator of all values even scientific, what would "objectivity" be? A chaos, that is, nothing, the void.' Lukacs is chided for restricting the dialectic (which here means having things both ways) to history, when nature too is

[18] *Materialismo storico*, p. 32.

[19] Cf. G. Cottier, *Du romantisme au marxisme* (Paris, 1961), of which the last section, pp. 207–226, deals with Gramsci.

[20] Croce, 'Come nacque e come morì il marxismo teorico in Italia 1895–1900', published as an appendix to Antonio Labriola, *La concezione materialistica della storia* (4th ed., Bari, 1953). Cf. McInnes, 'Les débuts du marxisme théorique en France et en Italie 1880–97', in *Etudes de Marxologie*, June 1960.

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dialectic because it is in social history: 'Matter, therefore, is not to be considered as such but as socially and historically organised for production; and so natural science [is] essentially an historical category, a human relationship.'[21] The upshot is a complete relativism that goes well beyond Sorel's '*métaphysique ouvrière*' to become a 'subjectivism of *homo oeconomicus*'. As Gramsci puns, he has converted Gentile's 'philosophy of the pure act' into a philosophy of the impure, or economic act.

Yet of course no relativism is complete, because that would be an unthinkable incoherency. Croce found residues of transcendence in Marx, and Gramsci did in Croce, and we can in Gramsci for the good reason that they must always be present to make discussion possible. If all is historically relative, that statement would be too, and thus in danger of ceasing to be true tomorrow. So Gramsci will be found defending formal logic and 'non-historical concepts'. This creditable inconsistency is not mentioned to make a debating point, but to draw attention to that substantial part of Gramsci's work that consists in the defence and illustration of formal logic, classic culture, liberal education, and disinterested enquiry. These activities are not, in practice, menaced by Gramsci's extreme and quite theoretical historicism, but they have been endangered by the movement to which he belonged. That he combined attachment to them with a confused relativism that would make them impossibly ambiguous is, perhaps, no more odd than that he combined a libertarian view of culture with the doctrine of rigid discipline in a Machiavellian party. To the extent that he reconciled these incompatible notions, it was on paper and in prison. In practice and at liberty, the party he helped found has been less successful; but if, as some signs suggest, it is entering on a phase of liberalisation, it will find nourishment in Gramsci's work, nourishment of a sort that, for all its adulteration, is not available at all in most other communist thinkers.

[21] *Materialismo storico*, pp. 50, 160.

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MOSCOW 1921

Meetings in the Kremlin

Bernhard Reichenbach

L.K. Do you remember your visit to Moscow in 1921 clearly? What were your first impressions?

B.R. Oh, my impressions are still very vivid. The journey from Berlin to Moscow took me about ten or twelve days. I went by sea at the beginning of March, and I had to wait eight days in Reval before I got my Russian visa. In June I was joined by my comrades, Alexander Schwab, Meyer, a metal-worker from Leipzig, and a former sailor called Jan Appel, who had gone the year before to Moscow with Franz Jung for talks with the Russian leaders—his story made a splash in the papers. We were all there for the KAPD, the Communist Workers Party, which was rather *persona non grata* in the eyes of the KPD.

L.K. Weren't you one of the first German leftists to go to Moscow?

B.R. Well, no. There were KAPD representatives at the second Comintern congress in 1920. In 1921 I went as a 'sympathiser' without a vote.

L.K. But I suppose for most of the delegates it was their first visit to Russia?

B.R. Yes, it was. It was my first visit to Bolshevik Russia, but I had been there before the war, when I was an actor. I didn't speak any Russian, but from the moment I crossed the frontier, and all the time I was in Moscow, everybody was very kind and friendly and translated for me—mostly it was Latvians who translated. Of course it was all right at the Comintern Executive—the ECCI—and later at the congress, because German was the official language, and all the top people spoke German fluently.

L.K. Where did you stay while you were in Moscow?

B.R. I was at the Hotel Lux, along with other foreign delegates to the congress, about a hundred of them. The only other foreigners I saw there sometimes were one or two journalists. I went along and introduced myself to Zinoviev, who was Chairman of the Comintern Executive, and after that I took part in the Executive meetings; they were held two or three times a week. Apart from Zinoviev, the Russians who attended regularly were Bukharin and Radek. Trotsky came once or twice, but never Lenin, although later at the congress itself these two were the chief speakers.

L.K. And how did the Executive operate?

B.R. Well, it very soon became clear to me that this 'International' was dominated by the Russians. And, of course, that was virtually inevitable, not only because Russia provided the money, and served as refuge for many revolutionaries who had been persecuted in their own country. What counted really was that it was the first Marxist party to make a reality of the dream of the 1848 *Communist Manifesto*. I don't mean that differences of opinion in the ECCI were suppressed, or that

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criticism at the congress was stifled or punished; but anyone who stuck to a position that differed from the Russian one remained pretty isolated.

L.K. Didn't the Russians differ among themselves?

B.R. Yes, but that usually went on behind the scenes, and when Lenin had had his say, the question was settled. His authority was simply taken for granted by his comrades. I don't mean they just obeyed mechanically or were under any kind of threat. I'll admit even today that his position was the result of his undoubted superiority. In lesser degree that was true of Trotsky also, but much less so. He needed confirmation from Lenin, and he always got it.

L.K. How would you compare the two?

B.R. They were two utterly different types of the revolutionary leader. They were both unusually talented as speakers, although there was nothing striking about Lenin, nothing impressive. But in discussion—in a small group or on the platform at a monster meeting—he was wonderfully convincing, by the way he argued, by the tone of his voice, by the logical sequence of the statements by which he reached his conclusion. When he was up against hostile opinions, his voice used to take on a note of incomprehension, as though he found it impossible to believe that anyone could fail to understand something so obvious—even when the matter was very far from obvious. Zinoviev used to imitate the intonation, but he didn't spark off the same response. Trotsky would speak with emotion, the attractive *pathos* of the revolutionary leader—not to say demagogue—from Danton onwards. And of course his position as the founder and organiser of the Red Army, which had just defeated Denikin and Kolchak and Kornilov, earned him the highest regard.

L.K. What did you think of the other Russian leaders?

B.R. Bukharin was a very pleasant man; he was easy to talk to, and would conduct his arguments in a scholarly and objective way. Radek was a brilliant controversialist, familar with German conditions and personalities; he had a sparkling wit—you would think that you were listening to a first-rate cabaret turn.

L.K. And Stalin?

B.R. Nobody mentioned him. He was never there during our discussions. I don't mean only that he didn't attend the meetings all the six months I was there—the ECCI, the third congress, and the foundation congress of the Red International of Labour Unions—I mean nobody even mentioned him. Of course, he was in the inner circle even then, but I only learnt that much later. But it was possible in 1921 to spend six months in Moscow without knowing of his existence.

L.K. How did you get news about what was happening outside Russia?

B.R. There was no radio, and one couldn't get foreign newspapers, except sometimes the *Rote Fahne*—and that came very late. Really we were quite cut off. But the Russians didn't feel that. Of course, there were the Russian papers, and now and again people would translate them for me.

L.K. Were the Russians specially interested in Germany? Did the bolshevik leaders still think it the most important country, or were they already disappointed?

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B.R. Both perhaps. The KPD was after all the strongest party outside Russia, and relations with Germany were good.

L.K. How did they assess the situation in Europe if they had no radio and no newspapers?

B.R. Oh, I'm sure that all the officials got the news fairly quickly. By telephone, and the diplomatic bag, and couriers. No, the Russians didn't feel isolated in that way.

L.K. Did you meet any Russians apart from the congress people?

B.R. Yes. I had introductions from Reval to some Moscow families. They were mostly non-political, but one of them, the Sundelevich family, had taken part in the 1905 revolution. And then of course I was professionally interested in the theatre. I met Stanislavsky, and saw wonderful performances of Gogol's *Revisor* and Gorky's *Lower Depths*. Of course they were in Russian, but I knew the German translations by heart—I'd learnt them as an actor—and so I enjoyed them tremendously. I also went several times to the Yiddish theatre.

L.K. Who else did you meet in the theatre world?

B.R. I got to know the actor Mikhoels. He was quite young then, but already well known; and I met Alexander Granovsky, the producer, who later emigrated to Germany. He wanted to entertain the congress delegates, and so he put on two or three performances of *Mysteria Buffa* by Mayakovsky, which Granovsky had translated into German; he asked me to help him put this on, and I did. Meyerhold—he was the most famous of the Russian producers at the time—disliked Granovsky's *mise-en-scène*. The two of them had the most furious arguments, and Granovsky asked me to join them. We sat up the whole night, and got through enormous quantities of tea and cigarettes, but I couldn't understand a word because they were speaking Russian and wouldn't take time off to translate for me. So in the end I asked them to drive me back to the Lux, because I had a meeting in the morning. The theatre in Moscow was very lively at that time, and in my opinion, had a really high standard.

L.K. Well, let's get back to politics. Where was your meeting that morning?

B.R. As far as I remember, the Executive always met in the Kremlin. I was given a Kremlin pass, and could come and go without any difficulty. On one occasion I had a conversation with Lenin, in his study. If I'd asked for an interview through the official channels, in order to tell him of the views and plans of the KAPD, the KPD would most probably have sabotaged it, and I wanted to avoid that. They were continually putting me off from one day to the next, so I wrote a very angry letter to Lenin. I told him I'd been there four weeks, as representative of the KAPD, and he had not yet bothered to hear what I had to say; if he had no intention of seeing me, it would be better if I went back to Berlin. I handed this letter in in Lenin's waiting room—his secretary, the very forceful Madame Fotieva, went quite pale at what she must have thought my cheekiness, and disappeared with the letter. I waited. Nothing happened. Then Radek came in; he clearly had an appointment with Lenin. He seemed astonished to find me there. When I told him what I'd done he laughed. Quarter of an hour later I was

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given a letter, in Lenin's own writing; he wrote in German, on paper headed—in Russian—RSFSR, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Moscow, the Kremlin, 1921. Here it is:

Werter Genosse Reichenbach!
Soeben, 16/5, 1 1/2 Uhr, habe ich Ihren Brief bekommen und gelesen. Ich bedaure in höchsten Masse, dass ich absolut keine Zeit gefunden, um mit Ihnen zu sprechen. Leider war ich während der letzter Wochen so überarbeitet, dass ich fast niemals eine Zusammenkunft arrangieren konnte und dringende Arbeiten, selbst das Lesen der wichtigsten deutschen Dokumente aufschieben musste. Bitte mich zu entschuldigen.

Ich bin auch jetzt in solcher Lage, daher absolut nicht im Stande, positiv zu versprechen, Zusammenkunft in einigen Tagen. Wenn besonders dringend, warum nicht kurze Vorschläge schriftlich machen?

Nochmals bitte um Entschuldigung und zeichne mit
kommunistischem Gruss,
Lenin.

(Dear Comrade Reichenbach,

I have just now—16th May, 1.30 p.m.—received and read your letter. I most deeply regret that I really haven't been able to find the time to talk to you. Unfortunately I've been so overworked these last few weeks that I could practically never arrange an interview, and had to put off urgent work, even the reading of important German documents. Please excuse me.

Even now I'm in the same situation, and therefore really not in a position to make a positive promise to see you in the next few days. If it's particularly urgent, why not put your proposals down briefly in writing?

Again asking you to excuse me I am
With communist greetings,
Lenin.)

Well, I had to be satisfied with that for the time being, but a few days later a secretary came up to me in the Lux, very excited, and said I must come at once to Lenin. There was a car waiting to take me to the Kremlin.

When I saw him he had not had his first stroke; he seemed perfectly healthy, and very resilient. What people said of him was quite true—he was a good listener. When I'd explained our position to him, he pointed to the map of Russia on the wall, and said Russia itself was so big, he couldn't really find time to know about everything.

L.K. After all, it wasn't long after the Kronstadt rising, was it?

B.R. Yes, and in addition to that there was the fiasco of the March action in Germany. Both of these events—which really shook the communist world—happened while I was en route from Berlin. The Kronstadt rising had been put down, but politically its effects were still being felt. The leaders of the Workers Opposition—Shliapnikov, who had been Commissar for Labour, Lutovinov, a trade union leader, and Alexandra Kollontai, who had been Commissar for Welfare—all condemned the rising, but attributed it to the expansion of the dictatorial

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state and economic machine. Well, in comparison with what we got used to from Stalin, Mussolini, and Hitler, what happened then seems pretty mild now, but the number of arrests went up, and the Workers Opposition were forbidden to undertake any activities.

L.K. Did you meet any of these people?

B.R. Yes, I did. After I'd been in Moscow a few days, Trotsky took a parade of the troops who'd just returned from their Kronstadt victory. There was a platform at the spot where the Mausoleum now stands, and Trotsky was there in uniform, his hand at the salute. He was surrounded by the party big bosses and the Comintern leaders. I had been asked beforehand—like a lot of others—to say a few words of greeting to the soldiers. I hadn't had much to do up till then with Russian comrades, and knew very little about the background to the revolt, but I was reluctant to accept the official version of sailors misled by white guards. So, fortunately, I refused.

L.K. Did the Comintern Executive discuss Kronstadt?

B.R. No, not a word, but we did in the Lux. The followers of the Workers Opposition trusted me, and my room became a meeting place. A great many of the Russian comrades spoke German—a good many of the Comintern employees were from the German-speaking Baltic areas. Shliapnikov and Lutovinov avoided me, but I paid many visits to Madame Kollontai. But the Executive spent an enormous amount of time on the March action, which meant a complete break with the policy the KPD had been following. The action had been undertaken partly in response to the urgings of Bela Kun, who'd been sent to Germany by the 'little bureau' of the Executive—it consisted of Zinoviev, Bukharin, and Radek. Paul Levi—the KPD leader who condemned the action and severely criticised Bela Kun—was expelled, but he had a good many supporters in the German central committee, and they as well as people on the other side came rushing to Moscow. The debate went on in the congress as well. I was sharing a room at the time with Kuusinen, and when we came back at night we still carried on with the argument. I criticised the way people on the Executive changed their position from day to day, and I was particularly angry about the way Zinoviev and Radek put the entire responsibility on the Germans, as though the Russians had had nothing to do with it. Kuusinen gave me a lesson in what he called dialectics—his talk was full of 'on the one hand but on the other hand', of 'contradictions' and their 'resolution', and in the end it seemed that the Executive hadn't changed its mind at all.

L.K. What was Lenin's opinion about this?

B.R. I was told that at first he had approved Bela Kun's mission, but after the event he changed his mind, mainly under the influence of Klara Zetkin; she had been a friend of Lenin's since the Zimmerwald conference in 1916. Later I had a long conversation with him. I told him that the KPD had been forced to use a revolutionary situation for a putsch, because up till then they'd been proceeding on the old reformist lines, putting a brake on revolutionary developments. And then that sudden volte face—trying to use the unions as instruments of proletarian revolution. Lenin listened quietly, then said it was impossible to move without the unions. This time too he turned to the map on the wall, and

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said smiling 'Of course, I can't be informed about everything that goes on even in my own country. The last document about the German situation which I studied was Radek's open letter to the German workers, in January. Have you spoken to Trotsky about this?' I said I had. 'And what did Trotsky say?' 'He wouldn't accept my arguments.' 'Well, I expect he was right.' I said we understood perfectly that he—Lenin—didn't have time to examine every question himself, but if he relied on whoever was advising him at the time, and allowed his name to be used as cover for the decisions of others, people would think the decisions were his, and in this case that would only do harm among the communist workers.

L.K. So that, about the labour movement in Europe, Lenin relied on Trotsky and Radek?

B.R. Yes, on Radek particularly for Germany. Not long after that conversation, Alexandra Kollontai came to see me and Alexander Schwab, she said she was going to oppose Lenin at the congress, where he was to give a report on the NEP. For her, the NEP was treachery to the revolution. She thought she might be arrested, and so she gave us a manuscript—it was her account of the programme of the Workers Opposition. Would we keep it safe? We said we would, and as we had a messenger going to Berlin a day or two later, we gave him the manuscript.

Lenin gave his report on 5 July. The applause was tremendous, and although Zinoviev as chairman called for speakers, nobody wanted to say anything. We KAP people—we hadn't a vote anyhow—wanted others to speak first, but as nobody did, Schwab got up to speak. He acknowledged the difficulties facing the Soviet Government, which forced it to make certain concessions, internal and external, and then he went on to warn the meeting against the Soviet claim to be the dominating centre of the world revolution. That was bound to mean, he said, that the movement would become an instrument of Russia's immediate national interests, while the interests of the proletariat in the industrialised countries of Europe would be forced into the background. He referred to an interview that Krasin, the Commissar for Foreign Trade, had given in Berlin, in which he had said that a strike which was being contemplated at that time would interfere with deliveries to Russia. If workers in capitalist countries were told not to strike because Russia needed the machines they were making the labour movement in those countries would be crippled.

L.K. And what was the reaction to that?

B.R. Well, Schwab got a little applause—from our KAP delegates, from the opposition in the Dutch party, and from some IWW syndicalists, who were there as guests. But Radek spoke and got the audience laughing and cheering. Then Kollontai got up to speak. It was pretty dramatic. She was obviously very moved. Behind her sat Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Kamenev, Rykov, Radek. (And just think what happened to them!) Lenin was taking notes. Trotsky sat unmoving, the others were whispering to each other and smiling behind her back—but we could see. She spoke in German—well, I don't have to tell you about her speech, it's in the record—and then she herself translated it, first into French, then into Russian—perhaps she didn't trust the interpreter.

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L.K. And nothing happened to her, although she appealed for an opposition group in the party?

B.R. No, nothing. Trotsky took her in hand and she gave in and submitted to party discipline—but that all happened behind the scenes. A day or two later she asked me to return her manuscript. I said I'd done what she'd asked—it was quite safe in Berlin. When I got back to Berlin in August I was given a pamphlet: Alexandra Kollontai, *The Workers' Opposition in Russia.* The KAPD, when they heard of her retraction, had the manuscript translated into German and published it.

L.K. And what did you do?

B.R. When our delegation made its report, the KAPD withdrew from the Communist International.

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PASSAGE TO RUSSIA

A Personal Reminiscence

Esther Corey

WHEN, in August 1915, the German Army captured and occupied my home town, Grodno, I realised I would not be able to return to Petersburg to continue my studies until the war was over.

Life in an occupied city was dismal and hopeless. I kept busy working in the local pharmacy and helping to teach in a school which a few of us had set up for the hordes of children, dirty, ragged, and underfed, who roamed the streets.

With the help of a German reserve officer who shared my anti-war feelings, I managed to get a job in Frankfurt as a chemist, hoping to continue my studies at the University there.

My employers found a nice room for me with a balcony, close to the pharmacy, and a pension where I could take meals. The room was lovely, but the pension was stuffy and the guests were stuffy. When one of the technicians who worked with me, Else Auchter, invited me to have dinner with her family, I was delighted.

As soon as I set foot in the Auchter home I ceased to be a stranger in a foreign land. Else marched me into the kitchen to meet a tall majestic woman whose twinkly blue eyes belied her stately appearance.

A few weeks later the family asked me to live with them. 'We will just have a third daughter,' the father added, 'it will be more fun.'

That was the start of my long residence at 57 Gutzkowstrasse. I began as an aquaintance, became a friend, and ended as a member of the family.

At the first dinner the entire conversation was proper for wartime. I was telling the kindly German family about my brother, a soldier in the Tsar's army, now a prisoner of war in Germany. Lily, the other daughter, indicated the picture on the piano with a wave of her hand and muttered, 'How many young people must die for one Archduke?' The young man in the silver frame was her fiancé, fighting in the Kaiser's army.

Evening after evening Papa Auchter would retire to his chair with the *Frankfurter Zeitung,* poring over its columns in silent concentration. With time, war weariness began to replace talk of victory. Often, prisoners of war marched through the streets of Frankfurt. It was easy to identify the Italians because they were so cheerful, singing and waving gaily and grinning at the onlookers. For them the fighting war was over. The gloomiest were the British—they neither waved nor sang. The prospect of being a prisoner of war in Germany did not attract them.

Early in 1917 I applied for a permit to visit my brother who had been now six months in a prison camp in the north. The authorities shook their heads. 'There is no precedent for it'. But my employer

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and friends vouched for me, and after three months I received the permit. In June I would get my vacation, and I planned to visit my brother.

In March came wonderful news from Russia. There had been a bloodless revolution! In Petrograd, the soldiers had refused to fire on the hungry populace. The headlines told us that the Tsar had abdicated, that Russia was about to become a constitutional democracy. Amnesty was declared for all political prisoners, and out of the jails came the men and women who had defied the Tsar. Others came from exile in Siberia, from Europe and far-off America.

Politically illiterate, I had never heard of Kerensky, nor of Lenin who was now en route to Petrograd, nor of Trotsky, taking ship from New York, nor of the many others whose names were soon to ring around the world—names like Bukharin, Kollontai, Lunacharsky, Borodin. All I knew was a boundless joy that the Russian people were at last released from oppression. My friends in Frankfurt rejoiced with me. The hearts of the whole war-weary world, it seemed to me, were gladdened by the tidings from Russia, and by the hope that the new government would sue for peace.

At the prisoner of war camp where I visited my brother, I found men homesick for their country and their families, anxious about the future. 'What is going on in Russia? When will we go home? Which party will be our government?' They asked questions I could not answer. There was hope, and there was the doubtful shaking of heads. My brother told me that Russian emissaries were visiting the camp, promising the prisoners 'peace, bread, and land'. Our lives and our actions were dependent on political events.

THE idyll at the Auchter home continued to be heartwarming and pleasant. The courses at the University of Frankfurt were interesting and enlightening. I particularly enjoyed those of Professors Franz Oppenheimer and Levall, but was disturbed when stickers appeared on the desks in the hall when Professor Oppenheimer was lecturing, saying, '*Nieder mit den jüdischen Professoren*'. At the same time the hall was so crowded that the doors to the corridors had to be opened to accommodate all who came to Oppenheimer's lectures.

I searched for organisations which were particularly concerned with war, with the elimination of war. At school I met students who were troubled by the same problems that troubled me—war, revolution, pacifism. I joined the *Sozialistische Arbeitsgemeinschaft,* which had a broad membership—workers and intellectuals, religious leaders, students, liberals, socialists. All were pacifists, all hoped for a new brotherhood. They owned co-operative houses and stores, they had discussions on Saturdays and continued their talk on Sunday picnics. There was a feeling of comradeship among them, but I could not see how their good will could have any influence beyond their own circle.

I remember the first discussions that were challenging and meaningful

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to me. They took place at the house of a Russian family in Frankfurt where a student, Flora Franken, sometimes took me. Left-wing writers such as Leonhard Frank were frequent visitors. They all claimed to be pacifists, yet they condoned revolutions. On this point we usually parted ways. Their arguments that millions were killed in war, and only a tiny fraction of that number killed in revolutions, did not inspire me. Yet some answer had to be found. The war of 1914 had wrenched us from a world of peace. It began to seem that if a choice had to be made, perhaps internal disturbances *were* minor misfortunes compared to the millions of men killed in a war between nations.

The disintegration of armies at the front was welcomed by all who wanted peace, and we were appalled when the United States of America entered the war. When we heard that the 'Yankees mean business', we knew that more lives would be lost in this 'war to end all wars'.

One of the frequent visitors to our political discussions was William Carle, president of the Veterans League, a left-wing organisation. In the Carle's comfortable apartment, I met many socialists making their way to Moscow—Souvarine from France, Sylvia Pankhurst from England, Paul Levi, Paul Frölich, and many other Germans who were to play a role in the international movement.

Lenin's name began to appear daily in newspaper headlines: 'Lenin is missing'. 'Lenin is alive'. 'Lenin is a German agent'. 'Lenin is in Kronstadt—Sweden—Finland'. The Independent Socialists wanted the Reichstag to debate the 'Lenin peace proposals'. The Norwegian socialists proposed the award of the Nobel peace prize to Lenin.

I was looking for something more 'concrete', for 'definite' answers, for a path to follow which would bring peace to the whole world. I had no concept of democracy as a way of life, but I felt instinctively (probably under the influence of Russian literature) the importance of the individual, his rights, his dignity. And I was incensed when governments interfered with those rights. Many decades later, I still remembered Professor Franz Oppenheimer's answer to a student in our class who asked him: 'What guarantees have you that the state will bring happiness to the people?' 'If your girl does not love you, there is not a thing the state can do about it.'

GERMAN liberal newspapermen who visited Russia came back with most favourable reports. Foreign invasion and the White terror were blamed for the difficult times. The country had to be reconstructed, they said, but the dearth of professional people, many of whom had gone with the Whites, hindered the rebuilding. Back from the war, German engineers and chemists who found no work in defeated Germany began to study Russian in order to apply for positions in Russia.

Now that Russia was free, I had a yearning to go back and contribute my bit towards reconstruction. Because of the blockade, it was not easy to go to Russia then. I thought of Carle who had 'direct contact with Russia', and asked him about it. He promised to investigate the

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possibility for me, and returned from Berlin with the news that I would be able to go to Moscow. I was to go to Berlin first, where I was to obtain a visa from the Russian consul and then get a permit from James.

'Who is James?' I asked.

'He is the unofficial representative of Russia in Germany. He checks on everyone who goes to Russia.'

On the day before I left Frankfurt, several visitors who came to say good-bye were a complete surprise to me. One was Professor Cornelius who taught history of art and philosophy at the University. He took from his briefcase page proofs of his latest book on the history of architecture. On the front page was a friendly inscription to me. I was rather surprised. I knew him only from lectures, and was sure that he did not know me at all. The matter was soon clarified. I was to take this book to Lunacharsky, the People's Commissar for Education, who was very popular among the European intelligentsia. I was also to convey a personal message to Lunacharsky that he, Cornelius, would be happy to offer his services to the Soviet government if called upon to do so. My wicker trunk was packed, ready to be shipped. I carefully wrapped the page proofs and put them in my rucksack. On the surface, the book was an innocent memento from a professor to a student.

At the Russian consulate in Berlin I received my Soviet passport. Everyone there was friendly and interested, especially the chargé d'affaires, an emigré who had gone back to Russia from Western Europe when the revolution broke out. He told me that I would make the trip from Stettin to Petrograd on a vessel transporting Russian prisoners of war.

A week passed. One boat left, and I was not on it. I had heard from neither Carle nor James. My money was dwindling. I became uneasy. Finally Carle arrived, but it was another week before I saw James. The interview—indeed, James himself—was to have all the atmosphere of conspiracy. At a stated time I was to stand and look into a shop window on the Kurfuerstendamm. I did so, and a short fat man with heavy glasses and a thick cigar stopped near me. It was James. His face was like a mask. When he spoke his lips did not move. A German woman who was waiting for him on the sidewalk joined us.

'What are you going to do in Russia?' he asked.

'Work as a chemist.'

'There are no chemicals there to work with.'

'I could work in a hospital, a laboratory, anywhere I could be of use.'

'You will hear from Carle,' he said and departed, as impersonal as he had come.

Another week passed. Another boat left. Finally I decided to go without that mysterious note from James. Boris Ivanovich, the chargé d'affaires, had no objections. 'Look up Karakhan and Furshchik when you get to Moscow,' he reminded me. 'They will help you.'

Carle, however, thought differently. On Veterans' League stationery

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he wrote a letter of recommendation to the League of German Veterans in Russia, presenting me as a 'reliable comrade' and asking them to extend me any assistance I might need.

On the boat, I was assigned a berth on the lower deck where the Russian prisoners slept. There were several other women, German wives of prisoners. I remained with the prisoners on deck, listening to their conversation. 'Peace, bread, land'—with this slogan the Bolsheviks took power, and this was what the prisoners talked about. 'They say that each peasant will get land', said one. 'I heard that each prisoner will get a little house', came the voice of another. Others were more pessimistic. 'Maybe I will find my wife and children in rags.' 'Maybe my woman got herself another man.' All of them were happy to be going home, glad that the war was over. I thought of my brother, sent home some time before, now happily reunited with his wife and son.

The first officer of our ship, von Stein, looked as though he might have seen better times. The German navy, second only to Great Britain's before the war, was now greatly reduced, and former captains of big liners were glad to get a tub like the one I was on. Von Stein was a handsome man in his forties. He had simple friendly manners. Inspecting the boat, he stopped to chat with the prisoners, asking them if everything was all right, joking with them.

'And who are you?' he asked me. I made a motion to get out my documents, but he waved his hand.

'I am not checking documents, they were checked when you got aboard. Where did you sleep?'

'Where the prisoners sleep.'

'Why didn't you ask for a cabin?'

'I don't want any privileges.'

In the evening, the prisoners gathered on the lower deck and sang old songs and the new Red Army songs, the voices resounding through the ship: Von Stein came down and joined in. A few months later I heard this same song and other songs sung by the Red Army to the rhythm of thousands of marching feet. The revolutionary songs had the magic of 'peace, bread, and land'.

WE were on Soviet soil. Immediately one became aware that the country was at war. Not a single man was in civilian clothes—the man who checked our documents, the man who made the 'welcome' speech—all were in uniform. The little wooden shack where our papers were checked was decorated with pictures of Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Lunacharsky.

We were put on a military train carrying wounded from the front. The whole railway system had been reserved for military transport; there was no private passenger traffic. Money was abolished, you could not buy a ticket. Only a few months before the White Armies had been in sight of Petrograd and the Bolsheviks had moved their capital to Moscow. The German army was still entrenched in Finland. The rails

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had been badly damaged and the train kept making detours. It was not until the next morning that we finally reached Petrograd.

The Commissar of the train was a young man, Kuznetsov, from Kazan. Formerly a student at Kazan University, he had joined the Bolshevik Party at the outbreak of the revolution. A handsome boy, he was not very efficient, nor was he eager to work. He paid more attention to the nurses than to the wounded. Most of the work was done by his assistant and former classmate, a Tatar. Since Kuznetsov never parted with the keys of the commissary, and since he liked to sleep late, everyone and everything in the car had to wait until he got up.

This first encounter with a Bolshevik on Soviet soil did not impress me, but then, it did not discourage me either. On the contrary, it convinced me of the difficulties which the revolution faced, not only from without but from within. Kuznetsov's behaviour reflected the acute shortage of reliable skilled men. James or no James, I was convinced that I had done the right thing by returning.

The trip to Moscow went smoothly and uneventfully. The Moscow station was busy, people friendlier than in Petrograd. In the train I had been told that I could get a room only through the Comintern, that they took care of people coming from abroad. In Moscow, to my surprise, I was able to check my trunk at the station. Off to the Comintern I went.

I had never been in Moscow before. It was livelier, sunnier, than majestic Leningrad. Again men in uniform crowded the station and the vast square in front of it. Military men in motor cars were dashing recklessly through the streets. Limousines bearing Soviet dignitaries and rickety carriages pulled by bony horses raised a clattering symphony on the cobbles. I recognised the Kremlin from pictures I had seen; it was a bright day, and the copper domes of the many cathedrals reflected the sunlight.

At the Comintern it was with great difficulty that I finally managed to see someone. I had no pass. In the room where I was led sat a man in his thirties. Although he was not a hunchback, his manner of holding himself, his long chin and thin lips gave one that impression. With him was a plump, attractive, dimple-cheeked girl with a turned-up nose. They were Mirov and Zina Vasilieva.

In a stern and not too friendly manner, Mirov began a real interrogation. Who was I? Why had I come to Moscow? Who gave me permission? I showed him my Soviet passport. Mirov looked at it and returned it to me with a sarcastic smile. Was there anyone who would vouch for me? I told him about Cornelius' book, in my luggage at the station, and Carle's letter, which I now had in my purse. I explained that I had not wanted to lose time, therefore I had not waited for a note from James. At the mention of James he lifted his eyes, still keeping his chin on his chest.

'Is there any German comrade here in Moscow who knows you?' he asked after he had read Carle's letter.

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'I don't know who is here'.

He read off a list. Yes, a few of them knew me. I named Rosi Wolfstein and some others.

'They are in Russia', Mirov said, 'but not in Moscow. They are on a trip to the Caucasus'.

'I have no place to sleep tonight. Can't I get a room somewhere, anywhere, and wait until someone who knows me can be found?'

'All the rooms are reserved for delegates to the Congress and comrades who came from abroad with a definite function'. Mirov pronounced every word slowly in a tone which did not allow for any further argument.

'Where are the headquarters of the German Veterans' League?' I inquired, thinking of Carle's letter as a last resort. Mirov did not answer. Vasilieva looked up the address and told me how to walk there.

The officer in the League knew Carle and the letter worked like a charm. He gave me a slip to the manager of the 'German House' which housed German prisoners of war who had remained in Russia and who collaborated with the Bolshevik government in propaganda and at the front. Some had their wives there too.

I was assigned to a room with three women whose husbands were fighting on the Bolshevik side. When I mentioned my baggage one of the Germans volunteered to drive me to the station. A clean bed was waiting for me when I returned. I was given a bowl, a wooden spoon, and a meal-ticket.

'You might still be able to get something to eat', the driver suggested. I rushed to the dining room and went to the window where food was given out. A plate of soup satisfied my hunger.

I sat up with the women while they told me about their husbands on the Siberian and southern fronts. It was getting late, and I began to unpack my rucksack. It was the first night since I had started on my pilgrimage that I could undress and sleep in a bed. As I was taking out my things I found a package with a note attached: 'Last greetings from the "capitalist world"'. It was signed A. von Stein. I distributed its contents—bars of chocolate and dried fruit—to my room-mates. For the first time in my long journey I broke down and sobbed.

I knew that this was only temporary hospitality at the German House and the next day I reviewed my prospects—Lunacharsky, Karakhan, Furshchik. After breakfast, I went to the manager to ask him how I could reach Lunacharsky. He looked surprised. 'Better telephone his secretary first'. Lunacharsky's secretary wanted to know in what capacity I would like to see him. My insistence that it was a personal message did not bring any results. I told him about Cornelius' book and the personal message. He would send a messenger for the book, he said, and I would hear from Lunacharsky. The messenger came the following day; I gave him the book, he signed a slip, and I signed a slip. I never saw the book again, nor did I ever hear from Lunacharsky.

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After this experience, I did not telephone Karakhan, but went to his home in person. I stopped at an iron gate in front of a magnificent mansion overlooking the Moscow River. Across the river was the Kremlin. There was no guard in front of the house. I entered and asked for Comrade Karakhan or his wife. The maid went to announce me. A beautiful, tall, slender woman came towards me. It was the wife of the Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Karakhan.

I introduced myself and quickly added that Boris Ivanovich in Berlin had suggested that I call on them. She said they had been wondering where I was, that Boris Ivanovich had mentioned me in his last letter. She led me into the dining room and asked me to join them at dinner, a simple meal. It was indeed a simple meal compared to the luxurious dining room with its walls panelled in cherry wood.

The Vice-Commissar's mother and his small son were at the table. We were joined later by Mrs. Karakhan's sister and two Red Professors. One of them was Furshchik. Karakhan himself had just left for the Commissariat, his wife explained. The Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Chicherin, preferred to keep his office open at night and to sleep during the day.

After dinner we retired to one of the living rooms. Men of all races—yellow, black and white—kept going by in turbans, in fezzes, in short coats, long coats, speaking in unfamiliar tongues. This mansion, I learned, now belonged to the state. Its former owner had fled. The Karakhans were occupying the main floor; the rest of the house accommodated state guests from Asia. It was Karakhan's particular function to establish relations with Asian countries.

The evening was spent discussing Germany and Russia. There were criticisms made of certain aspects of public life, illustrating the difficulties the new régime had constantly to face. I felt free to criticise the discrimination the Bolsheviks showed in admitting to the University only sons and daughters of workers and peasants. 'But we have to build up a proletarian leadership', argued the professors.

Furshchik, a former Menshevik, typical of the gentle type of Russian intelligentsia, was sympathetic to my situation. He was sure that my knowledge of foreign languages could be used in the Comintern or in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. With the world congress in session, with conferences going on in Moscow, with resolutions and manifestos being issued, everybody was crying out for translators. If I were interested, of course. . . .

The rest of the time was spent playing music and billiards. It was like an old-fashioned evening, and I forgot the reality of my situation. Mrs. Karakhan asked me to stay overnight in one of the unoccupied rooms, and Furshchik thought he would be able to inquire the next day about possible work for me. He would return with an answer.

A GERMAN POW put down my wicker trunk which he had brought from the German House. He said, half encouraging and half

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challenging, 'You don't have to worry any more, you're a Commissar now'. I looked around the cheerful, comfortable room.

I suppose that anyone living in the Hotel Delovoy Dvor then would have been considered a 'Commissar at Large'. It was not far from the Kremlin, and housed a number of delegates to the second congress of the Communist International, as well as employees of the Comintern. Thanks to the kindly intercession of Karakhan, and especially of his friend, Professor Furshchik, I now had lodgings, my rations of food and cigarettes, and, most important of all, my job.

In that period of War Communism, your job determined your way of living. The Revolution had abolished money as such. Only passholders could get a meal or travel by trolley or railway. Your certificate of labour entitled you to these passes. All the shops were deserted. There was a certain amount of barter on the Sukharevka Market, but this was a dangerous undertaking. Many a Russian lost his life after a Cheka raid on the market.

It did not take me long to discover that my rations (*payok*) as a Comintern employee were privileged ones. I was entitled to a room in the Hotel Delovoy Dvor, breakfast and dinner there, and lunch at the Comintern canteen.

The next morning I reported for duty at my new job in the headquarters of the Communist International. It was located in a narrow street some distance from the Kremlin. It was a two-storey, red brick, palatial mansion which formerly belonged to a wealthy man. More recently it had been occupied by the German Embassy. There the German Ambassador appointed after the Brest-Litovsk Treaty had been assassinated by the Social-Revolutionaries who opposed the treaty and who accused the Bolshevik Government of having sold out to the Germans. The room where Count von Mirbach was assassinated was kept closed. The rest of the building was occupied by the offices of the Comintern.

A Red Guard checked my newly-acquired pass, and I presented myself to my boss, Comrade Axelrod. He was a tall, thin man in his mid-thirties with light brown curly hair. He led me into an adjoining room, furnished with three desks, three chairs, several glass-doored cabinets, and an assortment of small tables piled high with manuscripts. At the desk in the rear a woman was sitting behind a typewriter. When Axelrod introduced me to Comrade Malygina, she murmured a curt greeting and gave me a severe look. There was one other person in the room—the girl who was soon to leave and whose job I was to take over.

'Orlova', said Axelrod, 'you will explain things to Comrade Neswishskaya'. With that he left us.

Malygina continued to sit motionless. From Orlova I learned that I was to take charge of the incoming material to be translated into other languages. Somehow, I lived through that first day in the office which resembled an international airport. Men, and some women, would come in, talk to Orlova in German, French, English, or Russian, deposit

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some papers and take others from the room. They were delegates representing trade unions, parties, and left-wing groups from all over the world. They were bringing in copies of speeches, resolutions, manifestos.

After a few weeks, I was running the office more or less competently with the aid of an English-speaking assistant. I soon discovered why Malygina, a typist who seldom used the typewriter, sat in our office. She had been planted there to keep an eye on those working in the office as well as on the people coming in and out.

There were not enough trustworthy people to do all the necessary work requiring specialised skill and knowledge. It had been necessary to engage people who were not quite trustworthy politically, and they had to be watched. All this, and more, I learned from Malygina who became both friend and mentor.

She was a short, thin woman with broad shoulders and stubby legs, a Chuvash who came originally from the Karelian Isthmus near the Finnish border. Her expression was always stern and unyielding. She always wore the same black dress (she had no other). I used to wonder whether she had ever been a child, whether she had ever been in love. One day I asked her how old she was. I was astonished to hear that she was only twenty-four.

She would never talk about her family or about her early years. She did tell me, however, that she had joined the Bolsheviks at the October Revolution, had enlisted at once in the Red Army and fought on many fronts. Her sacrifices for the Revolution had been so great that I felt humble and even ashamed to entertain the few doubts I occasionally permitted myself.

Once, when I remarked that it was impossible to file papers without filing cabinets, she told me quietly, 'When we first came to work here, we had to roll the inkwells between our palms to melt the frozen ink because we had no heat'. Then and there I resolved to make the best of the inadequate supplies and equipment. Another time, when I complained that I really had no training in running so complex an office as this, she said, 'Think of Trotsky who was never a military man and who has nevertheless built the Red Army'. I thought of Trotsky and tried with renewed determination.

When I once repeated to Malygina the story I had heard that Gorki (who joined the Bolsheviks later) had said to one of the old Bolsheviks: 'Now you put one bourgeois to work and set five Red guards to watch him,' she calmly replied, 'If we had not done it, we would have lost the Revolution'.

(*To be continued.*)

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FROM MEXICO TO MOSCOW

Manuel Gomez

Manuel Gomez is an American who lived in Mexico under that name after the First World War. He was at one time a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. He was interviewed in New York earlier this year by Theodore Draper. He begins his story in 1919, when he was working on a newspaper in Mexico City.

Q. Well, where shall we begin?

A. We might as well start with *El Heraldo de Mexico*. I'd persuaded them to have an English section, and I went along to the publisher with this mock-up, this dummy I'd prepared. They were very taken with it. They were particularly interested in getting advertising from the American colony and from American concerns. And so they hired me to edit this English section of *El Heraldo de Mexico*. I hired a staff of five people to run it. The staff consisted of Eleanor, my wife at that time, Mike Gold, Henry Glintencamp, the artist, a Mrs Carter, an old socialite of the American colony who was going to run the social column, and one other person whom I can't remember now—and, of course, myself. We were the staff. And we proceeded to use this English section with complete irresponsibility from the standpoint of our employers. For instance, on the 16th of September—which is the Mexican 4th of July—we ran an editorial saying ' Mexico is not yet free. It will not be free until it is free from Yankee imperialism.' And we took a great deal of stuff out of *Soviet Russia Today*.

Q. The English edition?

A. Yes, the English edition, and we just put it in there wholesale. The only thing that wasn't at all slanted towards socialism was the social column run by Mrs Carter.

Q. Did you consider yourself a radical or a socialist at that time?

A. Oh, I was a socialist. Indeed, I was a member of what was called the Socialist Party in Mexico, which consisted of what we called ' *cinco gatos* ' (five cats); it didn't amount to anything.

Q. Was Mike Gold a member, or didn't he yet consider himself a socialist.

A. He joined after he came to Mexico City. He had been in Tampico. We were the only members of the staff who were in the party, and I guess I was the only one who was really active, and activity consisted largely in attending meetings, helping to prepare leaflets, making an occasional speech, and so on. Interestingly enough, small as this group was, it did worry the highly sensitive Mexican labour movement, led by Morones, the CROM. He came down several times and tried to tell us that his organisation was looking for the same thing as we were, and so was the Mexican Government. But we were very leftist and very pure, and would have nothing to do with it.

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Q. And then one day Borodin came on the scene?

A. I'm coming to that, yes. Meantime, I had become acquainted with Roy, who had attended one or two meetings of the Socialist Party.

Q. What was your impression of him? Do you have any memory of your first impression of Roy? What sort of person was he? What did he look like?

A. Yes. He was tall, slim, handsome, and sombre. Deadly serious, intensely nationalist. He was really not interested at all in socialism then. But he had a great deal of time on his hands in Mexico and so he filled in part of it by going around to the various meetings as one will do; I think largely to hear Spanish.

Q. Why was he in Mexico?

A. He had been in California. He received money from the Germans, as I believe did Gupta and some other Indians who were in Mexico. And he had run foul of the United States undercover apparatus, and so he and his wife, Evelyn, she was an American, had gone to Mexico, as had these other Indians.

Q. In short, there was a little Indian group there, of which he was one?

A. Well, there were three or four, but the only two names I can remember are Gupta and Roy. They cordially disliked each other, all of them, and did not have much to do with each other. Roy was very young—I forget how old he was—but he was just about my age, and I was very young. You know, he was a Brahmin, had been in jail in India for nationalist activities—I believe he was in the terrorist wing of the nationalist movement. He took himself very seriously, and considered that his life-work was to prepare himself for and to act as a militant participant in the freeing of India from British rule. He had no interest in economic issues whatsoever at that time; he lived in a magnificent house, which he and Evelyn rented; just the two of them lived there. And since most other Americans of our group were very poor, it became a place where you could go and get a good meal once in a while. I subsequently earned quite a lot of money as editor of this English section, but we adopted a policy—I adopted the policy—of dividing salaries on an equal basis; we were very egalitarian. So that I only got an equal share. We did this with everyone, except Mrs. Carter, who was quite special. Roy and I became very good friends. I was fond of him. I thought he was very brilliant, a fascinating personality, and we had many arguments, long discussions about socialism, and we played a good deal of chess.

One day, a man came to my office at the *Heraldo de Mexico*—we had a whole section there, and it was quite a paper, you know. It had some of the leading poets and literary figures contributing to its magazine section. General Alvarado, the publisher, had political ambitions; he wanted to be President of Mexico, that was really the basis of it. And he might have become President, conceivably, had he not been assassinated. But his assassination was not while I was there.

One day a young man came to my office, an American of Mexican descent, who introduced himself to me as Rafael Mallen, and he and I chatted a while. He said that he had just come from the States and was so interested that there was an English section available, and so forth,

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and thought it would be nice to talk to the editors, and he said he was particularly interested to see how liberal the viewpoint of the paper was. He wondered whether we had any political views. And we said—that is, I said, because I was the only one he could talk to, but later on he also talked to Mike Gold—we said that obviously we were very sympathetic to the socialists, and to the left wing of the socialist movement because we felt that so many socialists had betrayed their ideals in the war. He asked how we felt about Russia, and I said, well, you've read our paper, you can see we're very sympathetic to Russia.

He said then, after changing the subject and going on to other questions, that he had a friend, with whom he had come to Mexico, who would like very much to meet us, and would we be willing to do that. He said his friend really would like to take us to lunch, me and Mike Gold. Well, it was a little something out of the ordinary. We said, sure. He said: Well, can you come right now? Well, just let me finish up what I'm doing—I forget just what it was—I'll get Mike and we'll go. And so we did. We accompanied him to his hotel, which I believe was the Ritz, and of course, Borodin was waiting. We went right up to the room; they had a suite, and Borodin was prowling up and down the room. He introduced us to the man whom we now know as Borodin, but he introduced us to him as Mr Alexandrescu. He had a Rumanian passport under that name. And Borodin, as was his custom throughout the period I knew him, approached the question as he did every question, very circuitously. You start, when you're talking to Borodin, talking about the World Series and by stages that you don't really realise are being passed, you arrive at a point where you're talking about the Russian Revolution. Borodin was, in most respects, one of the most cautious men I have ever known, and one of the most secretive, given to talking in whispers and looking around.

Q. Can you remember when this took place?

A. This was in 1919. I cannot recall the month, but it was reasonably early in 1919. I would say probably in the early summer—late spring or early summer.

He said: You have really very liberal newspapers in Mexico (after we had talked quite a while) haven't you. This *Heraldo de Mexico* is extraordinary. Do you think it would be a good idea to see—I'd be very interested in talking to the owner and publisher and editor of the paper. I quickly disabused him of that. I said: The policy of the paper is utterly at variance with the English section. The English section started with two or three American advertisements, and before we were finished we had lost them all; no American would advertise there.

Q. How did Borodin present himself? As a businessman?

A. Yes. A businessman who had come from Chicago and was in Mexico for an indefinite stay. However, before the first interview was over, it was very apparent that he did not have to be careful with us at all. And, indeed, for all of his secrecy, indeed, because of it, we quickly guessed that he was a Russian emissary of some kind. And it wasn't too long before all the bars were down, and he asked us if we could find a permanent place for him to live, and so on. He then told us—or I can't be sure if it was then or later—but anyway, in due course he told us all about

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himself, that he was a Russian, that he was a member of the Bolshevik Party, that he had lived for some time in the States, teaching school in Chicago, and he had come from Chicago with Rafael Mallen, who had been recommended to him by Adolph Germer, secretary of the Socialist Party at that time in Chicago. Mallen had come along as his interpreter, and played no part in any of these discussions after the beginning. Actually, as I have told you, the policy of the *Heraldo de Mexico* had nothing in common with our own policy. In fact, after a while, the General began to hear complaints, and then he would call me into his office and ask for explanations. And I would feign innocence, not understanding what the people were criticising. No, we were not; we were trying to follow the general policy of the newspaper, and so on. It's amazing how long we lasted.

Well, we became very friendly with Borodin, found him a place to stay, and the place where we found him to stay was in Roy's house.

Q. So that was how he met Roy.

A. Yes. Roy's house was somewhere near Bucareli, as I remember it. Borodin said he had come to Mexico with credentials from the Soviet Government as Ambassador to Mexico, and he did have, I understand, such credentials, though I never asked to see them. But he wanted to have [President] Carranza sounded out. He was to present these credentials only if there was an indication that they would be accepted, and that the Soviet Government would be recognised by Carranza. He could not get a favourable response to that. Carranza was very anti-American but he was pro-German, and he had no intention of rocking the boat to the extent that everyone—all of the great powers—would be against him.

Borodin also had another mission, which was to be his first mission, even if he became Ambasador to Mexico, and that was to finance and operate the organisation of what we would now call communist movements in Latin America, with Mexico as the centre.

Q. Not in North America?

A. No; for all Latin America. I'm not sure about that, whether it did not include North America. I'm not sure. He was very ignorant about Latin America. Well, anyway, Borodin and Roy became fast friends, and indeed, we were a trio of very fast friends, Borodin, Roy, and me. But since Borodin lived in Roy's house, he and Roy were together daily, and they formed a great appreciation for each other. Borodin was really a man of extraordinary intellect and encyclopedic knowledge. I remember how he traced for me, on a map, Washington's retreat across Long Island. He could quote Shakespeare at great length.

Q. So far we have no Mexicans in the story, except for Mallen.

A. No, and no Mexicans really will appear up to the time Borodin left. Except that somebody sounded out Carranza, some friend of Roy. Roy was highly appreciated by people in the Mexican Government; he had some good friends there. It was easy to do that in Mexico if you mingled in certain circles, and through Roy, some high-placed Mexicans (I don't know who) sounded out Carranza, and it was impossible.

Well, after a month or two, Mallen disappeared from the scene; and one day Borodin said to me: How would you like to take a trip? I said: Well, it sounds interesting. I'd have a problem about my job, but this

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English section is not going to last much longer anyway, because I'm having more and more interviews with the General; the honeymoon's over, so if I can be of help, why, I'd be glad to do it.

Well, he said, this is a very ticklish mission I have for you, but I think you would be really doing something worthwhile if you were to undertake it. I said: Okay, tell me about it. He said: You remember Rafael Mallen. I said, yes, of course. He said: Well, let me tell you a story: When I came to the United States, this last time, on shipboard I formed the acquaintance of a German who lived in Haiti; he was a bourgeois, but, nevertheless, a man with whom I had great rapport and in whom I placed considerable trust. (Borodin, of course, spoke perfect German, very good French, perfect English, and possibly other languages.) I was carrying a suitcase, and this suitcase contained some important blueprints, and they had what might be considered a compromising nature, speaking as one revolutionist to another.

Q. Did you understand by this engineering blueprints of some kind? Or did you think in political terms?

A. I didn't think or question. They could have been any kind—they could have been blueprints for an uprising; they could have been engineering blueprints, anything whatsoever. Well, Borodin said when the ship approached port, he began to feel a little worried about having this compromising material on him. And so he worked particularly hard at increasing the ties of friendship between himself and this German, and he got to the point where the German agreed to take the suitcase in as his own. And then, after they had passed the customs, to go to Borodin's hotel and deliver the suitcase to him in New York. Of course, there were no precautions Borodin could take, except to check the address of this German, and look at his passport which was a Haitian passport. Anyway, this man never showed up, and Borodin said that those blueprints were of tremendous value.

Q. And so he said, would you go to Haiti and get them?

A. He said he had sent Mallen to Haiti to get them, but nearly two months had passed and Mallen had not returned, and no word had been heard from him.

So my mission was to go to Havana. There was no direct steamship connection from Vera Cruz to Haiti. I was to go to Havana, and upon arrival there to check all of the sailings from Havana to New York, and if I found Mallen's name on any of the sailings, I should immediately report to him. I should also go to all the hotels in Havana and see if I could trace Mallen. If I found Mallen, I should bring him back with me, and he gave me a revolver, and said if necessary use this.

Q. Had you ever used one before?

A. Well, I had used guns in Mexico, hunting. And I had carried a revolver. In those days, everyone carried revolvers in Mexico. In those days no trains ran at night; and no trains ran in the daytime except with an escort train of soldiers in front, and an escort train of soldiers behind.

Q. So your first mission was to get Mallen?

A. Yes. If I couldn't find Mallen, then I was to take a boat to Haiti, Port au Prince, and outside of Port au Prince, up in the hills, I was to

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find this man. He gave me an address, and I was to present myself as from Mr Alexandrescu, and ask for the suitcase, and—in case there should be resistance on his part—to tell him that his relatives in Europe would not be safe unless he delivered.

Well, I arrived in Havana, searched all the hotel registers, looked around, searched the steamships going to New York, the passenger lists for some weeks back; no mention of Mallen. And then I reported to Borodin: 'Proceeding to Haïti.' I arrived in Haïti, at night, in pouring rain, going up to an area which now would be called Pétionville, up in the hills. I found the house. It was pretty well isolated. And a woman—a German woman—opened the door for me. I introduced myself from Mr Alexandrescu and she was almost panic-stricken. Or so it seemed to me. At least, she was trembling. Whether from panic or anger I could not be sure. She called her husband, and he came out, really furious. As soon as he heard Alexandrescu's name he went to a closet, opened it, and pulled out a suitcase, which had a false bottom and had been ripped open, and in the suitcase were lying some blueprints—rolls of blueprints. But the whole suitcase was torn apart. The false bottom had been exposed. I had not known anything about any false bottom, but anyway, I was pleased because the suitcase was full of rolls of blueprints. And then he said: 'Now, take these and get out of here! I've had one person here already, and when I tried to do Mr Alexandrescu a favour, he never told me that he was giving me something with a false bottom that could get me into trouble.' But since I had the blueprints I didn't care at all, and I took the suitcase and went.

Then I went back to Havana. And while I was waiting for the boat to go to Vera Cruz, I went and looked over the passenger lists, recent passenger lists, of sailings to New York. And I found that on the next day, a Ward Line boat to New York listed the name of Rafael Mallen as a passenger. So I stayed over, and I went to the boat, and said that I'm a visitor, and I went up and waited at the rail, watching everyone who came. Very soon Mallen came. He looked nervous. Maybe it was my nervousness. But he was certainly shocked and surprised to see me because I accosted him immediately. I said: Come over here. What are you doing on this boat? He said: I'm going to New York. I said: No, you're not. I put the revolver right up against him—he was shaking like a leaf. He was a very timorous guy, Mallen; and he was scared of something, all right; maybe it was the gun. I said: You are coming back to Mexico City with me. I cabled Borodin: Returning to Mexico with blueprints and Mallen. And I felt pretty good.

Q. Why didn't the German give the blueprints to Mallen?

A. Well, I can tell you the answer to that now, of course, though I didn't know it at the time. What was important in the suitcase was not there when I got it. He may have given them to Mallen, or he may have kept them himself. He may have told Mallen what he told me, that there were blueprints there. I only thought of the blueprints, because all I had been told about was blueprints.

Q. But you can't really be sure what happened between the German and Mallen?

A. Nobody knows. Well, I was really riding high. And when I arrived

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at the station in Mexico City from Vera Cruz, with Mallen in tow, there were Borodin and Roy, waiting at the station to meet me, their faces wreathed in smiles. And Borodin said: We have a champagne dinner for you. Really, it was an amazing reception.

As soon as we got to Roy's house, Borodin opened the suitcase and he said: There's nothing here but blueprints! I said: Well, that's what you told me to get. And he said: No! No! Where are the diamonds? Where are the diamonds? That's what I want! Now, you'll both have to be searched! He searched me, searched Mallen. I said: I don't know what this is all about.

Then he took Mallen into the sitting room and began to question him. Mallen professed complete innocence, complete ignorance of anything except those blueprints. He said he had been going to New York because the whole thing was such a mystery, such a puzzle; he was frightened by this false bottom and by the attitude of the German, and he wanted to get away from the whole thing. Borodin called him a liar and a thief, and threatened him with murder, torture, every conceivable thing. However, it produced no results. Finally he let Mallen go.

And that really was the end of the diamond episode, except that, of course, our dinner was one of deep gloom. I was sore at Borodin for not having had the confidence to tell me just what was what. But on the other hand, I was a soldier of the Revolution, and while I was sore and angry with him for a while, I realised that, after all, I was only a kid, sent on a mission, and one has to have a little sophistication in this world, and one doesn't entrust all the information to even a *trusted* messenger.

Q. Presumably, the diamonds were supposed to finance his activities. Did he ever say anything?

A. Yes, oh, yes! These diamonds were from the Crown Jewels. Some of them had been sold in Amsterdam, but the greater part of them could not be sold in Amsterdam because there were so many Crown Jewels being dumped on the market in Amsterdam at that time.

Q. Did he ever tell you what they were worth?

A. No. Except to indicate that they were very valuable; that they were to finance the whole movement, and it may have been just Latin America—it may have been North America—I really don't recollect whether it was spelled out. I got the impression it was Latin America.

Q. Now, all through this time, I assume, a great deal of intellectual activity had been going on—Borodin talking to you and to Roy about Marxism, and so on. Would you say you were his two most important converts? Or did he also have relations with other people there?

A. No, he had no relations with anybody else. He was too secretive for that. He relied on us for all contacts. He really didn't have to do any converting of me. It was just a question of teaching me. He had to teach me, and we converted the party—we made the party in Mexico affiliate to the Communist International.

Q. That is the Socialist Party of Mexico?

A. Yes.

Q. Of which Roy at one time was President, isn't it so? Roy says that

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at one time he was elected head of the Party. Do you remember anything of that sort?

A. No, I don't remember that. But it could be that, after he was converted, he did become active in the Party. I didn't recollect that he was President of it, but he could have been.

Q. Would you say that the Party numbered in tens, hundreds? How large an affair was it?

A. Tens.

Q. In Mexico City primarily?

A. Yes, with one or two outside connections. There were a number of parties that had 'socialist' in their name all over the country, and even in Mexico City, but they weren't—they were more populist than anything else.

Q. And so the Socialist Party of Mexico affiliated to the Third International.

A. Well, it didn't exactly have a formal affiliation but it expressed its adhesion, its support of it. And because, after all, this thing was just being organised. But Borodin did convert Roy, and did teach me. At the end of 1919, or early in 1920—but I think December 1919—Borodin asked me if I would go with him to Spain as his interpreter. And of course I said yes, I would, and so we went to Spain.

Q. Just the two of you?

A. Just the two of us. Yes. I was his interpreter and assistant. We travelled in a Spanish Line boat—I forget the name of it now—he had a very elegant suite, really very elegant.

Q. From Vera Cruz?

A. From Vera Cruz. He always defended his high living, which was pronounced, by saying that that's the only way revolutionists could travel without being suspected of being a revolutionist. But it never completely pleased or convinced me; I recognise that there was a real value in travelling as a first-class passenger, but that did not require a luxury suite, and to travel in a way which made you conspicuous.

Q. We're now in Spain.

A. At Borodin's suggestion, after we got to Spain I scrutinised all the Spanish papers. And certain names began to recur in a context that we considered significant. In that way, I contacted first, and screened out for Borodin, and then introduced to Borodin such people as Professor Fernando De los Rios, Daniel Anguiano, who was very prominent in the trade union movement—one of the leaders of the socialist trade unions. You know there were, broadly speaking, two trade union movements in Spain—the Syndicalist, anarchist-led movements, which had their base in Catalonia—and the socialist-led unions, which had their base in the Basque country, in Asturias and Madrid. They were of almost equal strength.

Q. And Borodin was more interested in the socialist side than the anarchist side?

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A. Yes. However, we did contact one of the foremost leaders of the Anarcho-Syndicalist trade union movement, Angel Pestaña, who later turned up at the Second [Comintern] Congress. Generally speaking, Borodin, like all the Russians, had great scorn for the anarchists, and the anarchist movement; I would say almost as much as Marx had for Bakunin; and it was reciprocated. However, there was an impulse of sympathy for Russia. Naturally, after the Revolution it was a point of attraction which the syndicalist leaders were affected by.

Q. So, as far as you know, at this time, there was still no communist nucleus in Spain?

A. No. None. Borodin did not stay in Spain very long—not more than a couple of weeks. He met these people, did nothing with them. Then he left me in charge, as representing him, with instructions to organise a communist movement in Spain, and with some suggestions as to how to do it. His key suggestion was to work through the youth movement—you know, the socialist youth organisation—where we had gotten the best response.

He left Spain, and left me money with which to operate—not very much—enough to live on. I lived in the home of a shoemaker in Madrid—I don't recall that I paid any rent there, but I was living from hand to mouth. However, he said that when he got to Berlin, he would get more money, and he would get money to me.

He went to Berlin, and did send me a little money, and then went on to Moscow. Meantime, I was there as the representative of Borodin, who was a roving delegate with credentials from the organising committee of the Communist International.

Q. He didn't use the name of Borodin, though—did he still use the Rumanian name?

A. No, this was Borodin. In Spain, he said he was a Russian. But the name Borodin carried nothing with it, anyway, at that time. His personality did; he had a real impact on the people that he met.

Q. How was the party formed? Can you tell us that?

A. It was formed as a Committee for the Third International. The term 'Communist International' was not generally used at that time. I don't know whether it had even been adopted by anybody. We formed a committee for the Third International, and then we formed a youth organisation.

Q. How many people were in it at the beginning? How large a group was it? Was it solely from Madrid, or was it more representative?

A. Solely from Madrid. I would say we had about 20 altogether in the central group.

Q. And who were the leading personalities?

A. I cannot think now—Anguiano was one. Daniel Anguiano, of whom I spoke——

Q. The Secretary-General—that first man—what was he? A trade-unionist?

A. He was an intellectual. He was the head of the Socialist Youth Organisation, and his affiliation with us at the beginning was secret, but

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we forced him to split—I forced him to split—the Youth Organisation, and form a youth organisation for the Third International, because he could not carry his organisation with him; it took some time, and some effort, with some of these people, to get them to declare themselves openly. In the beginning, some of them professed their sympathies, but they wouldn't declare it. Later, we did have an open movement for the Third International. Then we established a magazine—a weekly paper, which we called *El Obrero* [The Worker], which I edited, from this shoemaker's house, with the help of the group. I remained in Spain, working and meeting with this group every night, and some of them also during the day, for some months. However, I didn't hear any more from Borodin after this first sending me of money, and I didn't know really what I was to do next. Then we received the call for the second Comintern congress. So I decided that I had better go to Berlin, where I knew there was a strong centre. Roy was in Berlin, on his way to Moscow, and I would probably go to the second congress of the Comintern. And to provide for that, I wrote to Mexico, and I received from Mexico a mandate as delegate from the Communist Party of Mexico to the second congress of the Third International. This was under the name of Jesus Ramirez, which I was using at that time. . . .

Q. And when you got to Petrograd?

A. I got to Petrograd, and it really was very exciting; this was the period of war communism; it was a spartan life in Russia, and there was really something very attractive and electric about the thing. You really felt a sense of purpose in the air and of sacrifice. It was really a wonderful spirit. I was presented to Zinoviev, showed my credentials, and we talked a bit. Of course, he was very busy and turned me over to somebody else, and when I mentioned Borodin's name they got him on the phone like that [snaps fingers], and everything was smooth sailing afterwards.

Borodin was in high favour with Lenin at that time—there had been periods when Borodin was out of favour—he had a direct private line to Lenin. He rushed over to see me and we had a pleasant time together, and began to meet other delegates. They put us up at the Lux Hotel. Only foreigners were at the Lux Hotel.

Q. But this was in Moscow?

A. Yes. I was sent on from Petrograd to Moscow. That's right. But the second congress opened at Petrograd, at the Smolny Institute, and then went on to Moscow.

In Moscow I met John Reed and Louise Bryant; I met Fraina; I met Gallacher of the British party, and Murphy. I met Angel Pestaña—the Spanish syndicalist—anarchist—who appeared at the congress but then denounced it, and passed out of the picture, as far as the communist movement was concerned.

Q. Were you the only Latin American delegate at that congress? Or, let's say, the delegate for a Latin American country.

A. I'm not sure, but it may very well be.

Q. In any case, you were accepted as such—not as an American delegate.

A. That's right. The American parties were all underground, and I had

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no contact with them—had never belonged to them. I had belonged to the [American] Socialist Party. But by this time, you see, there was a Communist Party, and then a Communist Labour Party, and later, a United Communist Party. But I had no contact with them.

Q. Did you find the Russian leaders interested in a country like Mexico and in organising in Latin America?

A. Lenin was.

Q. How do you know?

A. Well, he was interested in seeing me, and having a personal interview with me—I went to the Kremlin during the congress and showed my papers—everyone had special passes at that time.

Q. What language did you talk in?

A. We talked in French and English. Lenin could speak very good English, but for some reason or other he did not like to; he preferred to talk French or German.

When I say he could talk very good English, he wasn't fluent, as Trotsky was and Radek. Bukharin was pretty good in English, too. And the only other one who could speak English at all, really, was Lenin.

Q. And you spoke in English to him, and he could understand——

A. Yes, that's right. Sometimes I spoke French or German, but mostly English. He was not interested in the socialist movement in Mexico. He realised at once that it was bound to be very rudimentary. But he was interested in the masses of the people in Mexico, in their relation to the United States—whether there was a strong opposition movement to the United States—and he was also very anxious to know whether there was an indigenous movement in Mexico, representing the interest of the Indians—and whether we had any literature in their languages.

Q. In other words, he asked you questions? A more or less systematic enquiry?

A. Yes, that's right. He was interested in the peasant base of a movement in Mexico, and we talked a little bit about agriculture, and he told me then about the book he had written about agriculture in the United States. He said: It's not widely known—you may not have known about it. I said: No, I don't know anything about it. He said: Well, I'll send you a copy. That is about all——

Q. How long did it last—the talk?

A. About twenty minutes.

Q. And what was your impression of the man? Do you still have any vivid memory of what your impression of the man was?

A. Yes, I have—very vivid. First, physically: I have the impression of a very florid, freckled man; and he talked with complete absence of affectation—complete ease—and also, an amazing ability to put himself on your level, so that you were talking to a friend, and he was talking to a friend. He used very homely phrases, and yet he seemed very quick, alert, keen. He seemed to be a completely selfless man; he seemed to be interested in nothing except the movement. And, of course, that was his whole life, naturally, so it's not surprising. But the impact of his

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personality was very great, and it was the impact of a friendly man who, at the same time, was a very determined, resolute man, who might be ruthless.

Q. Was this the only occasion on which you spoke to him?

A. It was the only occasion on which I spoke to him alone. Yes. I spoke to him several times for a few minutes during the congress.

Q. Is there anything significant in your memory about these other meetings with him?

A. No, because they can't really be called meetings. But I did want to say some things about the Russians and the second congress. The first and strongest impression that was made upon me as a delegate coming to the Third International was the Russian-ness of it—the way the Russians were organised to take everything over. This was something that no foreign delegate was prepared for. Right from the beginning, instead of being really what you would call a give-and-take conference of fellow parties from various countries, it was a Russian proposition. And to some extent then, of course, it would have had to be, by virtue of the prestige of the Russian party, having made the Revolution, and being in command of a state—and by virtue of the intellectual quality of the leaders.

But I'm talking about something far beyond that, something that was prepared for in caucus—no other party had a caucus. The Russian party, right from the start, took over the congress, and took it over completely. Zinoviev was Chairman; the Russians controlled the credentials committee, the Russians controlled every committee—they prepared an agenda, they had all the resolutions already approved in their own caucus, they knew exactly what the congress was going to do—nobody else had thought of such things. And they already had the organisation of what was to come out of that . . . Zinoviev to be the President of the International. Now, Zinoviev was pretty well unknown to the people from the other countries. Nevertheless, they elected him President of the Communist International, because this was the way it had been arranged.

Q. Did you have any personal relationship with Zinoviev at all at this time?

A. I talked with him quite a lot, yes. No one spoke Spanish—so, naturally, I gravitated to the people who spoke English, and the Russians who were easiest in English were Trotsky, Bukharin and Radek. Trotsky was a very busy man—but he spoke very often at the congress. I suppose next to Lenin and Zinoviev, he spoke the most, and was certainly the figure of greatest attraction next to Lenin. But he did not mingle with the delegates because he had to go away immediately after every meeting.

Q. When they got to know you, did they regard you as a Mexican or as an American?

A. I was regarded as a Mexican, though they knew I had come from the United States. Still, my party was the Mexican party, and that's what counted.

One more thing about a personality—Radek. At that time, Radek played a role in Soviet affairs that was a combination of what a political

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Commissar—if you could think of an international political Commissar —and an Ilya Ehrenburg combined played. He was *the* journalist for the world on Russia. And also he was a political figure. During one of the recesses, some of us were talking—incidentally, in the Tsar's toilet; it was a big room. We were sitting around, some English and American delegates and myself, and Radek came rushing through with a briefcase, and I think it was Fraina who called out: Hello, Machiavelli; and Radek stopped, and he said: That's interesting; I've just put Machiavelli into my briefcase; and he took it out and showed it to us, and said: I am taking it with me to Poland.

Q. Did you have any meetings with Reed at this time?

A. Yes, I did. I guess I was about as friendly with Reed and Louise Bryant as I was with anyone, except that it didn't last very long, because Reed got sick very soon.

Q. You know that there is this question of Reed's disillusionment, and there are two sides to the story. There is some evidence on both sides. Have you any sense of the state of his mind? After all, he had a very bad time at the congress. Radek virtually insulted him.

A. Yes, he was made a fool of.

Q. Then he got sick. Did you have any discussions with him, or know anything that would cast any light on this——

A. Yes, I had a distinct feeling of some kind of disillusionment. Since I did not share that disillusionment, I felt sorry about it.

Q. Was it because of the way he was treated, or was it an intellectual thing? He was still wedded to the idea of the IWW and dual unionism, and so on—and they cracked down on him on this score.

A. Well, I think now—though I did not think then—I think now it was partly that, but largely that, in a country where euphemisms were used all the time I think he got tired of saying things that, somehow or other, were a distortion—were *partly* a distortion. For instance, this is the kind of thing I mean: We used this phrase, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and we *knew* that this was a phony phrase, not in the very beginning, but in Moscow, when you could see that the proletariat wasn't exercising any dictatorship, and you could see it was a euphemism for the dictatorship of the party. We were repeating these things, but in our hearts we really could not believe them. And I think it was that.

Q. Were you present when Reed died?

A. Yes, I was. I was at his bedside with Louise Bryant.

Q. Was Fraina there too? You know that Fraina left some memoirs —he was going to write an autobiography at the end. And in the outline for his autobiography, he says that he and Reed had not gotten along very well—they were politically on different sides. Nevertheless, before Reed died, he called for Fraina and there was a kind of reconciliation. Was Fraina there when you were there with Louise Bryant, or were you there alone?

A. He may have been there once; he was not there when Reed died. I'm sure he went to the hospital. I think we went once together, as a matter of fact.

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Q. You mean you were there when Reed expired?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. Reed is supposed to have told Madame Balabanoff about his very strong feelings against Zinoviev. He is supposed to have detested him.

A. Well, I'm not surprised, because most of the delegates detested Zinoviev.

Q. Why? Because of his manner?

A. In the first place, I think it was his manner. But I think there was also a basic resentment about the prominence of Zinoviev which was forced upon everyone, even though no one really knew who had chosen him, and the authority with which he spoke was an authority which was arrogated, rather than given by the Congress; the Russians forced him on the Congress.

Q. Of the non-Russian delegates, who were outstanding, as you remember it?

A. Well, the non-Russian delegates were a pretty scraggly lot. At that time, the only left French movement of any significance consisted of Loriot, Cachin and Souvarine. And Loriot was an ex-schoolteacher; Cachin was an experienced deputy, who had been an extreme right-wing socialist—and he was under suspicion at the Communist International all the time. In fact, I'd said that he would never be accepted there, but he was, and given a place of honour.

Q. You said this where? At the congress?

A. Yes, at the congress. But it was ridiculous because I had no authority to denounce anybody, and he was one of the few personages they had; as a matter of fact, Cachin was a wonderful example of the fact that a man can change, because he did adhere to the left-wing movement, and became a cornerstone—even though as a figurehead—of the Communist Party of France. He never returned to what we used to call 'opportunism'. He never was a man of intellectual gifts—he was a venerable figure, that's all you could say about him.

Q. Then you were invited to speak at the congress, in the name of the Mexican party?

A. Yes. Once, and very briefly. So much for the French. The Germans were a very mixed lot. They ranged all the way from defenders of Kautsky to representatives of Max Hoelz, who was carrying on armed warfare. All kinds of groups. I would say the only one whose name persisted, and reached a post of importance, was Willi Muenzenberg. Muenzenberg took a very prominent part in the congress for a foreign delegate. I mean, no foreign delegate took a really prominent part. The only prominent foreign delegates were Cachin, Muenzenberg and Serrati.

Q. But he didn't stay very long?

A. No, that's right. Now, the British—well, Gallacher was there, and Murphy.

Q. What about Fraina? What was your memory of him at the congress? He spoke there twice.

A. Yes. But the Americans were not listened to because they all held

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positions that the Russians had already decided were wrong. In fact, none of the foreigners were really listened to. They were allowed to speak a certain number of times, but it was just a question now of whom are we going to use, and whom are we not going to use. Fraina had to speak, because he was one of the few Americans among the American delegation.

Q. And he was also the American who went over to the Russian line on the trade union question?

A. Yes. But you know, except for the Russians, most of the people at the congress were mediocrities. Of course there were exceptions, but that partly explains the Russian dominance.

Q. Well, the congress came to an end, and something had to be decided about what you were to do. What happened about that?

A. I was asked to stay for a time, and so were Fraina and Katayama. One day Lozovsky sent for me and said: Would you talk to Kuusinen? I believe you and some of your friends are going to be working very closely with me. I went along to Kuusinen—he spoke English, by the way, he had been in the United States. He said a bureau for the Red Trade Union International was to be established in Mexico. I wasn't asked whether I would go, or wanted to; I was just assigned. We were troops under discipline. Fraina and Katayama were to run the bureau and I was to be their assistant. I was given money—three thousand dollars I think it was, to get to Mexico and live there till the others showed up. We didn't travel together, but I went as far as Berlin with Fraina. In Berlin I got involved for a bit in their underground apparatus—a regular office machine for transferring visas from one passport to another, fixing up papers, forging police cards, things like that.

Q. So the Berlin organisation had changed a bit since you left for the congress?

A. Yes, it had. Before there were only Russians, trying to get people to Moscow. Now they had it all organised for getting people wherever they were sent. They could use Germans for that, and even me. And they did, while I was waiting to leave. Katayama arrived in Mexico almost the same time as I did. We took a house—a miserable little house, because the money, which seemed such a lot when I got it, didn't go far. I did the marketing and he did the cooking and we cooked over a charcoal stove.

Q. He had been a chef?

A. Yes, he was a good cook. And then Fraina arrived, and we settled down to our work.

(To be continued.)

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ROSA LUXEMBURG

Sketch for a Portrait

Peter Nettl

AN intelligent if incomplete assessment of Rosa Luxemburg's ideas and work is possible from her published writings alone. These were known to at least one of her previous biographers, especially the German part of her story. Her activities in the Polish movement have remained much more obscure. This is partly due to the break of continuity in Polish communist research, and even more to the total extinction of the Polish communist leadership in the *Yezhovshchina* in 1937 and 1938. It has been overcome by renewed efforts since 1945 and particularly since 1956. But the language is a barrier, and the importance of Rosa Luxemburg is still weighted in favour of her German activities, but not to anything like the extent to which the availability of German sources and scope of German research would suggest.

Where previous work is particularly deficient is in the illumination of Rosa Luxemburg's private life. This was not an accidental omission. Marxist biography on the whole plays down the personal aspect except in so far as it illustrates political purpose. When Paul Frölich wrote about Rosa Luxemburg there was much about her that he simply did not know, and his portrait of her personality is no more than an exercise in formal hagiography. Those who used their personal knowledge to draw a more intimate and lively picture did so for political reasons. Both Henriette Roland-Holst and Luise Kautsky promoted Rosa Luxemburg the woman into a political counter-weight to the communist version of Rosa Luxemburg as a political process; the result is one-sided in spite of every effort to be 'objective'; the idea of having to choose between the woman of the red revolution and the woman of the pink window boxes is ludicrous and arbitrary. Rosa Luxemburg's private life cannot be separated from her political life nor does the one contradict the other; nor can her private life simply be ignored or subordinated to her political activities.

It is precisely the clarification of this relationship that has been greatly helped by the hitherto inaccessible sources which I have been able to use—the large collection of letters to Jogiches, to Warszawski, to the Zetkin family, to Mehring, and to various other people in the Polish and Russian parties. Rosa was an inveterate letter writer. At times one really wonders how she found time to do anything else. The letters were written hurriedly but always with deliberation and to a purpose; their very haste enables us to capture the mood of the moment, which was often at variance with the public mood of official writing in the party press.

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WHAT sort of person was Rosa Luxemburg? Small, extremely neat —self-consciously a woman. No one ever saw her in disarray, early in the morning or late at night; her long hair carefully but simply combed upwards so as to add to her height. She had not been a pretty child and was never a beautiful woman, but her appearance always commanded respect long before she opened her mouth. Her dark eyes set the mood of the moment, flashing in combat or introspectively withdrawn, or—if she had had enough—overcast with anger or boredom.

The fastidiousness extended through clothes right down to her polished shoes. Plain but expensive and carefully chosen clothes, based on a precise evaluation of the image which she wanted to create. Clothes that were never obtrusive or claimed an existence in their own right; accompaniment not theme. The hip defect acquired in early childhood was overcome completely in all postures but walking—and Rosa Luxemburg was an habitual walker precisely because of the difficulties of this exercise. She judged people—though with admitted humour—in accordance with their ability and willingness to walk; Karl Kautsky's physical laziness was one of the first black marks chalked up against him.

Her apartment was a faithful mirror of her person. Books carefully stacked in cases, manuscripts put away tidily in a desk, ornaments, paintings, and botanical collections all neatly labelled and instantly to hand. Rosa Luxemburg could write for a book from province or prison, and secretary, housekeeper, or friend was able to lay hands on it instantly. The favourite apartment was at Cranachstrasse 58—the red room and the green room, the old but well-preserved furniture, the carpets, the collection of gifts large and small which, once they had passed her critical taste in the first instance, were treasured for ever. She gave up this apartment in 1911 ostensibly because the city and its growing noise and traffic had engulfed it. More probably its associations had become too painful. She then moved out to the outskirts of the city at Südende, where she remained until 1916, and formally to the end of her life. Her home, her privacy were always sacred. Even in Switzerland her rooms near the University had met the overpowering need for refuge and escape for those hours which so many of her contemporaries argued away in smoke-filled cafés. The closing of doors against all comers was always one of the pleasantest moments of her day. Though many people stayed with her, sometimes for long periods, it was always *her* home. Her guests were welcome but the extent to which they could make themselves at home was carefully circumscribed. Rosa Luxemburg entertained often, but unlike so many emigrés from Poland and Russia, there was nothing easy-going about her hospitality, and those who abused it were quickly shown the door. The English phrase 'make yourself at home' was unknown to her. In every respect she was as houseproud as any middle-class German. No wonder that those of her students from the party school who were honoured with a Sunday invitation would sit hesitantly on the edge of the sofa and clutch the proffered plate of cake to their bosom for fear of dropping crumbs!

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SUCH an establishment needed money and Rosa Luxemburg's problems in this regard were precisely those of any middle-class career woman, whose appetite for minor luxuries constantly exceeds the supply of funds with which to meet it. Her private bank account—strictly to be distinguished from the party funds—was delicately balanced between credit and debit; most of the time projected income had already been pledged, if not actually spent. Apart from extraordinary sums needed to help close friends in trouble, an annual crisis centred on her summer holiday; Rosa Luxemburg always planned a year in advance and began to consider the possibilities the day after she returned from one year's excursion. These holidays were mostly in the South—Switzerland in the early days to see friends and particularly Leo Jogiches; later Italy whenever she could afford it. Always there was the mirage of a long trip further afield—Corsica, Africa, the East. None of it ever happened.

Among her closer friends she had the reputation of a spendthrift. Hans Diefenbach left her money in his will—strictly in trust: 'Her knowledge of micro-economics is less sound than her macro-economics'. Rosa's *fata morgana* of ready cash was something of a joke to her German friends but a harmless one, since she was punctilious about repayment and refused to borrow money from anyone if she sensed the slightest danger of its distorting a relationship. When she went on holiday her funds were available to those who accompanied her. Again and again Konstantin Zetkin's plea of penury was set aside with the assurance that she would have enough for them both. There were periods when her journalistic work was largely inspired by the need to earn; the sense of urgency in her writing, which always suggested that she was bursting with things to say, was contradicted by private admissions that she had not the slightest notion what to say until she actually sat down to write it. Fearful of letting money dominate her relationships, generous to a fault with friends, unable by nature to save and quite uninterested in trying, she was one of those people who were secure in the knowledge that, if not God, at least her own abilities would always provide. The only evidence of meanness was in her dealings with shopkeepers and printers. To her these were a special class of twisters whose every account had to be carefully checked and with whom negotiations and much oriental bargaining, though she would never entertain it in other spheres, were a necessary and sensible proceeding.

The whole problem of money, the need to relate earning in some way to spending, was something that, as an objective aspect of the human condition, came to Rosa Luxemburg relatively late in life. As long as she was living with Leo Jogiches in Switzerland, his own substantial remittances from home—he came from a wealthy family—were enough for them both. But money played a curiously symbolic role in their relationship right from the start. Rosa Luxemburg, who in the last resort would not defer to the judgment even of Jogiches, almost eagerly seized on money as a symbol of total deference. Whenever she was away

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from him she accounted in detail for every penny, and craved indulgence for her often imaginary extravagance—while he in turn played out his part in the mannered comedy by scolding her soundly. On this subject his word was law; to borrow or not to borrow, to take from the German executive or to ask for support from home—he developed a grotesque stinginess as part of the necessary tresorial act. And Rosa, who would circuitously but firmly reject his criticisms of her policy in Germany after 1898, when she went to live in Berlin, who berated him for his clumsy proof reading of her doctoral thesis and much besides, nonetheless beat her breast over his financial strictures. This continued as long as their personal relationship itself.

Rosa Luxemburg was never an easy person to get on with. Her passionate temperament, of which she was aware and very proud, generated a capacity for quick attachment but also an unpredictable touchiness which acted like trip wire to unsuspecting invaders. Her rigid standards of behaviour were partly the moral superstructure of her philosophy of life. But, though rigid, they were not constant; she deliberately adjusted them to what she thought was the capacity of the other person. A man like Parvus, who had a strong temperament himself, was allotted much broader limits than most run-of-the-mill members of the German party. Devotion and a willingness to please were no use by themselves; people like the unfortunate son of Bruno Schönlank were abused for their servility, and so, oddly enough, was Angelica Balabanoff. Anything self-pitying, anything routine, above all anything *mechanical,* started at a disadvantage; so did self-satisfaction and a display of public virtue—German qualities all, but English too; Rosa Luxemburg's private hell was Anglo-German. Other nordic nations suffered too; more by ethnic generalisation than personal dislike since she had few Scandinavian or Dutch acquaintances. Henriette Roland-Holst, a close friend for a time, was specifically exempted. No doubt Rosa was a racist—but in her dislikes more than her approval. The Russians came off best. There was always an innate sympathy for Russians—in a German context; against their own background they were at once judged more severely. Her friends in the Russian and Polish movements always appeared much more attractive when among Germans than among their own compatriots. One aspect of Rosa's internationalism was always to prefer the foreign.

To make things more difficult, her standards rose the closer people were to her. Her privacy became more exacting and sacrosanct. Those admitted to the inner circle of friends were always in danger of trespassing on areas which were totally ' off limits '. Part of the reason for the chronic difficulties with Franz Mehring was the stop-go attitude which he adopted, the rapid change from intimate friendship without reservations to complete rupture and back again, with the additional risk that all the fruits of intimacy would be used as public ammunition during the next stormy period. Following her initial experience of Mehring after her departure from the editorship of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung,*

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she was determined not to leave valuable parts of herself in pawn to him again, and it was not until the war that their friendship once more became suffused with any genuine warmth. Close friends also had to have some measure of intellectual strength—she was not capable of intimacy with a stupid person. In spite of her close attachment to Clara Zetkin, the disparity of their intellectual capacities obstructed the friendship. It was only Clara Zetkin's acceptance of Rosa's primacy and her agreement with nearly every view she propounded on important questions that enabled the latter to put up with Clara Zetkin's personal obstinacies and political sentimentality.

THERE were a few people whom Rosa Luxemburg disliked beyond all reason. This was connected only marginally with politics. Kurt Eisner, an intelligent, sensitive, and kind-hearted person, was anathema to her. The few letters she wrote to him were couched in a tone which stands out by its pettiness. 'Oh, anxious ethical colleague', she began an epistle in 1905, 'may you drown in the moral absolutes of your beloved *Critique of Pure Reason*.'[1]

Similarly Trotsky, whose intellectual and personal characteristics were very much like her own, was always referred to like an enemy in whom she could find nothing creditable. Where personal dislike cut across political alliance, dislike prevailed; one of the most curious examples was her ferocious dislike of Karl Radek and her refusal to accept or even notice the contribution he was making to her cause. This at a time when she badly needed allies, particularly intelligent ones who shared her views.

One type that Rosa Luxemburg always disliked was the 'great man'. She resented Plekhanov's authority even before she attacked his views; as she wrote to Jogiches, one looked for opportunities to put out one's tongue at him. Much of her resentment against Kautsky was generated by his unchallenged authority in all matters of theory—a position which she did not automatically accept even in 1898. Authority was a matter of present performance, not the capitalised glories of the past. Thus she denied Plekhanov, Kautsky, and Wilhelm Liebknecht, but never Bebel; even after they had fallen out openly in 1911 Rosa Luxemburg never attempted to belittle his role in the SPD. On the whole she was uncharitable in her personal judgments. Her letters to the few people with whom she was really intimate—Leo Jogiches and later Konstantin Zetkin—show that even those who considered themselves close friends or allies were not immune from sarcastic epigrams which played up their faults and gave them small credit for their virtues. The letters to Jogiches from Germany shortly after her arrival in 1898 present the SPD leadership as a cabaret turn of caricatures. Of course she felt an outsider and to a large extent chose to remain one; she never accepted German moorings and proudly differentiated her own attitude to life from theirs. Nonetheless her judgments were far too specific for a mere culture clash.

[1] From a private collection of letters in Israel.

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Rosa despised those whose opposition was merely the product of resentment, of necessity rather than choice. She had an unerring eye for *personal* weaknesses—just as Lenin, like an owl at night, could usually spot *political* weakness however well hidden or camouflaged.

But these judgments are not only evidence of her particular personality. They show a very rare self-confidence which was not only psychological but also social, a product of the security of the peer group in which she was firmly anchored from 1893 until after the 1905 Russian revolution. All those who have written about Rosa Luxemburg have seen only the personal aspect but have ignored the social one. Without it no portrait of these years can be complete; and even afterwards, when the peer group began to disintegrate, its influence still lingered on. The Polish-Lithuanian Social-Democrats (SDKPiL), that small, intellectually active group who broke away from the main Polish Socialist Party in 1893, a year after it had been founded, were much more than a doctrinaire sect. They were a peer group long before they became a political party, providing its members with all the attributes of a primary group, an association which all the other emigrés lacked—a family, an ideology, a discipline, in short a constant and reliable source of strength. In some respects as conspiratorial and tight a group as Lenin's Bolsheviks, but open and outward-looking in others, its discipline was largely voluntary and was confined to public action; for the rest it left large areas of freedom and choice to the participants, even room for profound intellectual disagreements. That is why the comparison with the Bolsheviks is instructive and at the same time meaningless. Trotsky, with all his friends, admirers, and disciples, never had the benefit of a peer group; hence his difficulty in building a following before the revolution and the fragility of his political support after 1923.

The leading members of the SDKPiL were people of singular intellectual distinction and ability. Men like Dziersynski, Marchlewski, Hanecki, and Unszlicht all achieved positions of importance in Bolshevik Russia; the first occupies a central place in the revolutionary pantheon. Marchlewski and Hanecki were too individualistic to fit into the tight party apparatus of the post-revolutionary period; they found their roles among that small circle of Lenin's *hommes de confiance* who could be entrusted with special missions outside the party routine. Adolf Warszawski was intimately associated with the Polish Communist Party of which he remained one of the leaders until he was liquidated in 1938 along with almost the entire Polish leadership—Stalin found the spirit and tradition of independence among the Poles too great for his comfort. Jogiches and Rosa Luxemburg played brilliant roles outside the Polish movement, particularly in the creation of the German Communist party; the one an indefatigable organiser, the other a formidable debater and publicist. No other group in the Second International was so brilliantly led.

ROSA LUXEMBURG'S relations with this group are a fascinating study in themselves. With the significant exception of Jogiches, she

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was not especially close to any of them. She criticised them all severely on occasions; both their views and their persons. But all the same she was attached far more profoundly to them than ever to the German party. Her criticisms and comments were part of the intellectual elbow room which the SDKPiL permitted, indeed almost forced on its members. In so far as the old-fashioned word companion has any political meaning in a modern context, it applies to this relationship—more than ally yet less than friend; a connection more secure than personal sympathy but at the same time more colourful than any purely political relationship.

Naturally Rosa Luxemburg's role in the SDKPiL cannot be understood except in terms of her special relationship with Leo Jogiches. In the eyes of the world they *were* for many years the SDKPiL. It is rare for an intimate personal relationship to be matched by a political one without one dominating the other. Yet here no political concessions were made for personal reasons, nor personal allowances for political harmony; there was no question of either one leading the other. In her letters the varied contents of their lives are so completely intertwined that the very distinction between personal and political loses all meaning. Only with Jogiches did she ever achieve such fusion. This woman, whose personality was built out of concentric, increasingly impenetrable rings of which the last and innermost was the loneliness of absolute privacy, always needed one and only one person from whom nothing must be hidden. Precisely because she found it so difficult to open the last doors of frankness and intimacy, she made a point of stripping herself almost ritually naked before the one person she loved. And she demanded ruthless honesty in return—it was the one quality of which her love would not permit the slightest diminution. To a man like Leo Jogiches—closely compartmented, secretive and reserved by nature, unwilling to commit and reluctant to communicate—Rosa Luxemburg's insistent demand for frankness posed a constant challenge. He was jealous, both of her success and her person. The openness she required forced his jealousy into the open—with the result that Rosa had often to make difficult choices and flout the wishes she had forced him to express. They clashed often and hard, especially during her early months in Germany, when her judgment was pitted against his remote control. He was open enough about her—it was with regard to himself that she had to insist on communication, often simply on scraps of information. 'Why have you not written?' was her constant complaint. By 1905 she suspected that some of the doors which she had painfully forced open were being closed against her once more; she rushed to Cracow in September of that year only to 'look straight into his eyes', and the fear of losing him may well have been a contributory reason for going to Warsaw in December 1905, in the middle of the revolution.

Her devotion to Jogiches ended brutally fourteen months later when she heard that some of the doors closed to her had been opened to someone else. Rosa Luxemburg saw only black and white in personal matters; the strain of maintaining constant political contact with someone

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whom she was now determined to shut out of her personal life proved enormous. Nonetheless the relationship survived, fossilised for a time in the clamp of sheer political necessity. In the spiritual desert of the First World War, with many of her old friendships brutally broken off, the resurrection of the old comradeship with Leo Jogiches must have helped them both to survive. But it was furtive and unspoken—and has left almost no trace. Touchingly, Jogiches spent valuable time in ensuring that she was supplied with the right food for her increasingly delicate and nervous stomach. During the last few months of her life he was constantly at her side, advising, guiding, cheering. This man, who had set his sights at the personal leadership of both the Polish and the Russian parties, whom his opponents thought ambitious to the point of madness, was finally content to accept a subordinate role to the brilliant woman who had for all practical purposes been his wife. After her death, in the few months that remained to him, he concentrated his efforts on the identification and punishment of her murderers, and to ensure that her ideas should survive.

When she learnt of his betrayal in 1907 it was Rosa Luxemburg who insisted on her freedom. For a long time Jogiches would not let her go—and beneath the hectic political activities from 1906 to 1909 a dark and grotesque comedy was played. From those who knew of their relationship—and this was already a privileged minority—the carefully preserved front of political collaboration hid the vacuum between them. The role of Rosa's unique confidant was transferred to another man—a young, sensitive, talented, and unhappy boy whose mother was one of Rosa Luxemburg's closest friends. This touching interlude, which Rosa herself described as straight from the pages of Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir,* is totally unknown. Rebound, loneliness, and disappointment no doubt played their part. But there was more. Rosa Luxemburg's temperament was capable, in her own words, of setting the prairie on fire, her passion for life more than enough for two; one wonders how the young man's frail shoulders were able to bear the intellectual and emotional torrents which Rosa Luxemburg unleashed on those she loved. In the end it was too much; twice she sensed a restiveness which made her withdraw, and yet on both occasions she felt his need for her to be greater than his revolt. It was not until the war that she finally recognised the frailty of the vessel into which she had poured so much of herself. But the need in her which he had filled was as constant and real as ever. She promoted Hans Diefenbach to the privileged place. Her letters to him reveal a sad but profoundly moving inflation of a small personality into the needed image of a big one—yet they are shot through with flashes of irony at this very process of self-delusion. Again one wonders how uncomfortable she must have made the pale, precise, fastidious, and reserved Hans Diefenbach, who worshipped her in fear and trembling. He died in the war, and now there was no one left. Her irrepressible warmth had to be shared out between faithful and deserving friends like Luise Kautsky and Marta

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Rosenbaum. No lover, no intimate confidant waited for Rosa Luxemburg to come out of prison. And when she did emerge there was also no more time for the exquisite business of love and living.

YET there was nothing dry or formal about her relationships. She inspired enormous loyalty and devotion in her immediate circle which, had she permitted it, would have itself become a form of love. People like Mathilde Jacob and Fanny Jezierska, themselves basically unpolitical or only on the fringes of politics, were largely inspired by loyalty to Rosa Luxemburg. After her death Mathilde Jacob soon put active politics behind her. Her bewildered plea in the pages of *Freiheit* in answer to the communist charge of absconding with Rosa Luxemburg's literary remains speaks volumes for Rosa's magnetism. This capacity to inspire purely personal devotion was one of the complications in the later struggle for her heritage; to many it seemed inconceivable that someone so free and 'unpolitical' as Mathilde Jacob could really have carried her allegiance to incipient communism to the bitter and foreseeable end.

The same problem was raised by Rosa Luxemburg's approach to art. Here too she was very much the product of her age and time, member of a cultured international optimistic bourgeoisie. She did not so much deny the existence of a valid proletarian culture; even the notion of such a thing was utterly incomprehensible to her. She was quite oblivious to the self-conscious efforts in the SPD to produce workers' songs and poems, a deliberately 'popular' art. At the same time the new forms of expression that were breaking through in painting and music were lost on her. She went to a few of the exhibitions—when Diefenbach succeeded in dragging her along—but she did not enjoy them. The other Russian revolution of the first decade of the twentieth century, that of the painters Kandinsky and Jawlensky, the movement of the *Blaue Reiter* and *Die Brücke*, were to her as remote as the realities of the 1905 upheaval in Russia were to the German bourgeoisie.

Her tastes were conservative and classical. She had neither the pioneering disdain for convention of an aristocrat nor the self-satisfied certainties of working class realism; her sole demands were clarity, euphony, and honesty of purpose.

Imperceptibly her judgment advanced from a basic series of 'doubts' to a selective approval of such arts as stood her severe tests. There was little instinctive about it. Any 'clever' appeal to the intellect, any romantic invasion of the emotions, any too obvious *purpose* in art—even social purpose—meant automatic disqualification. Art was *sui generis*. It had above all to reflect the realities of its time, at most foreshadow the immediate future but never extrapolate into the distance; what made art timeless was not vision but quality. As a means of social change she preferred direct political activity. Yet in speaking of 'art' in general we are already doing Rosa Luxemburg a major injustice.

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She hardly used the word, and never generalised about it. It was as private and individual a sphere as politics were public—and as such not susceptible to systematic analysis. Rosa strenuously resisted the many attempts of her friends to get her to indulge in literary criticism, and wrote an introduction to her translation of Korolenko only with great reluctance and at the insistence of her publisher.

The great classical names were her familiars—in music Mozart and Beethoven; Titian and Rembrandt as painters. Her favourite contemporary composer was Hugo Wolff, who set to music many of her favourite poems by Goethe and Mörike.

Her literary preferences were wider, for writing was her natural habitat. First the German masters—Goethe, Mörike, Lessing—then the great French classics. She did not like Schiller, partly because she had been spoon-fed on his *Geist* in the parental home, but also because a worshipful legend was being woven around him by the literati in the SPD. Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring campaigned against the attempt to make political capital out of Schiller as a potential revolutionary poet.

Undoubtedly the most important aspect of Rosa's interest in literature was her profound feeling for the Russian 19th century writers. She was not the person to experience the sudden burst of sympathy which Lenin felt when he first read Chernyshevsky's *What is to be done*? No single literary figure blazed her moral trail. Instead a whole tradition, a discipline, had captured her admiration; not what they said but how they said it. Year in year out she preached the importance of the Russian novelists to German socialist ears that were intermittently attuned but more often blocked—a philistinism which roused her to grotesque fury.

In prison during the war she tackled a full-scale translation of Korolenko's *History of My Contemporary* and wrote a preface in which for once her views on literature in general and the Russian writers in particular were systematically set down. Almost unconsciously she established a general classification of merit which is most revealing. Among other things it embodied the acute Russian-German dichotomy which played such a significant part in her life. For her this was the central axis of contemporary civilisation—the achievements of Western bourgeois culture tempered by the socialist future emerging in the East. For, just because Rosa Luxemburg made no artistic concessions to politics, it would be a mistake to suppose that art and politics were not related on the highest level of personal consciousness. There was no conflict here—conflict was only created by self-conscious attempts to manipulate art for political purposes instead of letting it play its own autonomous, possibly even superior, role. The greater art was, the more important its ultimate political effect.

It is in this context that the fascinating interplay of German and Russian influences must be viewed. When Rosa first went to Germany in 1898 the political quality of German socialism dominated her thinking.

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Much as she disliked place and people right from the start, these were personal, psychological faults; the German contribution to political civilisation was still predominant and the task of spanning West and East consisted in emphasising German unity and self-discipline to the disorganised and inchoate Russians. In course of time all this changed. Closer acquaintance with Russian writers—in her home, self-consciously permeated with Western *Kultur*, they had been relatively neglected—now opened up vistas of civilisation from the East which made the German contribution look increasingly formal and unreal. Participation in the Russian revolution of 1905 accelerated the process. Not that she appreciated masters like Goethe less; it was rather their irrelevance to the German present when compared to the immediacy of writers like Dostoevsky and Tolstoy which obsessed her. More and more the particular German virtues became so much debris in a torrent of social confrontation. Real cultural as well as political salvation now seemed to lie in the East. A touch of the conscious slavophil was there, though it did not come to the surface. The official criterion of excellence was the relationship of art to society, the inescapable concern for social questions in Russia which seemed so strongly to contrast with the dead weight of formal *Kultur* in Germany.

Throughout her life in Germany she remained a self-conscious Easterner. It was a difficult situation and she never tried to make it any easier. Rosa Luxemburg's allegiance was not to Germany but to the SPD. The frequent references to a fatherland were not merely a sarcastic caricature of a sentimental and chauvinistic phrase of patriotism but a positive acknowledgment to the only real fatherland she knew and wanted—the proletariat in general and German social-democracy in particular. She was not alone in this. It was an allegiance shared by many of the intellectual emigrés, who deliberately renounced the attempt to find refuge in any particular nationalism of the present or future. The only attainable fatherland was the working-class—or more correctly the proletarian revolution.

(This essay is adapted from a chapter of a book on Rosa Luxemburg to be published shortly by the Oxford University Press.)

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RADEK AND THE GERMAN REVOLUTION, I

H. Schurer

IN Ruth Fischer's book *Stalin and German Communism*, there is the reproduction of a poster depicting a sinister Svengali-like character with dark-rimmed spectacles swinging a torch, the very image of the wicked incendiary. To the eyes of the present generation, this picture seems to have sprung from the imagination of Julius Streicher, from the pages of the *Stürmer;* on the contrary, it is an early Soviet poster showing Karl Radek at his task of revolutionising Germany. The October revolution had been undertaken in the firm conviction that the fire would spread westward, that the bolshevik coup in Petrograd would be shortly followed by a victorious communist revolution in Berlin and the establishment of a German-Russian communist power bloc. If any individual can be named as the chief agent seconded for this task of carrying the world revolution begun in Russia to Germany, it is undoubtedly Radek; the failure of the grand conception of the permanent revolution, under whose auspices the bolsheviks took their momentous decision in November 1917, became the pretext for his political downfall.

In December 1923 Radek's political career as the architect of communist policy in Germany came to an end. He, who in pre-war years had been the infant prodigy of international revolutionary socialism in the arena of three movements, the Polish, the German, the Russian, found himself pushed back at the age of 38 into the second rank. Looking back to the early twenties, many will be surprised to learn that men of good judgment then thought of Radek as the third member of the leading Soviet triumvirate including beside himself Lenin and Trotsky. 'All the others are extras, compared with three actors on the Soviet stage', declared the menshevik emigré Oskar Blum at the time. Werner Sombart compared these three to the triumvirate of the French Revolution, Robespierre, Danton, and St. Just, and found the bolsheviks immensely superior to the Jacobins. Yet for decades Radek's name has not appeared in any Soviet work of reference, and it is only in the last few years that we have learnt the date of his death.

Radek, whose real name was Karl Sobelsohn, was born of middle-class Jewish parents in Lwow, then in Austrian Galicia, in 1885. Up to 1918 he retained his Austrian passport issued under the name of Sobelsohn, and his Austrian nationality was often the subject of controversial remarks. At an early age Radek joined the legal socialist movement of Austrian Galicia; it was only after he had spent some terms at various universities, at Leipzig and at Berne in 1904, that he became associated with the political group whose influence over him was to last for the rest of his life, the group of Polish marxists round Rosa

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Luxemburg and Jogiches, the acknowledged leaders of the marxist social democrats of Russian Poland who opposed the patriotic socialist party of Pilsudski and Daszynski, the PPS.

On the question of Polish independence, Rosa Luxemburg's group differed on one side from the patriotic PPS, on the other from the bolsheviks, who regarded Rosa Luxemburg's negative view of national self-determination as far too abstract. Over this question, Rosa Luxemburg's party had quarrelled bitterly with the Russian social democrats, and the issue remained a bone of contention between the Polish marxists and the Russian bolsheviks up to 1923, when the Poles finally came round to the bolshevik view. On this issue, at least up to 1919, Radek sided with Rosa Luxemburg against Lenin. The shifting relationships between the two groups before 1914, sometimes good, sometimes hostile, were to influence Radek's life very deeply.

The great formative experience for the young Radek was the first Russian revolution of 1905. The Russian emigrés, Lenin, Trotsky, Parvus, all found themselves in St. Petersburg during the months of the revolution; the Poles, Rosa Luxemburg, Jogiches, and the youngest disciple of them all, Radek, appeared in Warsaw, Radek then looking up to Rosa Luxemburg as his revered teacher and to Leo Jogiches as a father and master. After Jogiches' arrest in March 1905 Radek carried on editing the paper of Rosa Luxemburg's group, the Warsaw *Czerwony Sztandar* (Red Flag), till he, too, was arrested. After his release, Radek joined Jogiches in Terjöki, Finland, and in 1908 appeared in Germany which, for the six eventful years up to the end of 1914, became his home.

Once there, he soon established himself, a young man in his early twenties, as a leading marxist commentator on world politics and international relations. A portrait of the period shows him as a mild looking scholarly youth, rather like an inoffensive graduate student. The great turn, the rift in the radical marxist camp, came in 1910 with the break between Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg. The Polish marxist advocated a complete break with the traditional parliamentary tactics of the German party, and the adoption of a policy of mass action and political mass strikes. In this quarrel between the old marxist orthodoxy and the 'new left' of Rosa Luxemburg, Radek, as was to be expected, sided with his teacher against Kautsky. He had made his headquarters in Bremen, and from here, together with the Dutch marxist Anton Pannekoek, he took a vigorous part in the discussions, specialising in attacking Kautsky's views on international relations. On his one appearance at the congress of the Socialist International at Copenhagen in 1910, Radek poured such scorn on the formulas favoured by the great majority, that even Lenin thought the impetuous young man was going too far and stating his case in too uncompromising terms. On many subsequent occasions Radek crossed swords with Kautsky in *Die neue Zeit*, and his close friend Pannekoek supplemented Radek's theories on the inevitability of a catastrophic war and the resultant inevitability of the international

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socialist revolution with ideas of his own which would some day enter the body of bolshevik doctrine, after having been popularised by Radek.

IT was in the years immediately before the war that Radek was involved in a series of three interlocking conflicts which had disastrous consequences for him. First there was a genuinely ideological conflict in the German movement, where the marxists broke up into the warring wings of the Kautskyan centre and the extreme left, to which Rosa Luxemburg, Jogiches, Julian Marchlewski and Radek belonged; this came into the open in 1910; there was at the same time a nascent conflict between the main group of marxist Polish leaders in Berlin and the Russian bolsheviks, on organisational questions, with resulting differences between this Berlin centre of the Poles and the Warsaw organisation of their party in which the local group took a pro-bolshevik line against the Berlin leaders, in other words, a struggle in which Lenin intervened in favour of the Warsaw rebels against the Berlin leaders. Third, there was the quarrel that broke out in the little town of Göppingen in Württemberg in April 1912. The local SPD, belonging to the extreme left, claimed that the district organisation, which was on the extreme right, had used its funds to divert their local paper from its left course. The editor, August Thalheimer, went on leave, and the vacancy was promptly filled by the big gun of the extreme left, Karl Radek, called in from Bremen for the express purpose of making Göppingen a bastion of the left cause against the right-wing district organisation. The scandal assumed such proportions that the national executive of the party was called in to arbitrate. They had an almost impossible task, but tried to be fair to all parties; Radek, obviously egged on by others, went on accusing the national executive of favouring the right, and did so in a most provocative way, even after it was clear that the charge was unfounded.

The 'Göppingen incident' created such an uproar in the SPD, revealing such a disquieting state of cold war in the party, that in August 1912 the Chemnitz party congress had to devote a great deal of its time to it. During the debate it emerged that Radek's formal membership of the German party was a matter of uncertainty and his behaviour in money matters casual and unreliable. There were plenty of hostile undercurrents against the alien Jewish intellectual, and the leader of the party, Bebel, evoked stormy applause from the majority of the congress when he said how sick he was of the whole disgusting squabble; after what they had heard, he felt he could not even bring himself to pronounce the name of the villian of the piece. Then, after the Göppingen incident had been thrashed out *ad nauseam*, a new bombshell exploded on the last day of the congress; news arrived that Radek had just been expelled from the Polish Social-Democratic party!

In the conflict between the Berlin leaders of Polish social democracy and the Warsaw organisation, Radek took sides against his old teachers in Berlin. There stood the phalanx of Rosa Luxemburg, Jogiches,

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Warski, Marchlewski, Dzerzhinski; on the Warsaw side there stood Radek, Hanecki, Unshlikht. The animosity generated by the split must have been of the most intense kind. Only so can the sequel be explained.

JOGICHES and Marchlewski, in their dislike of their former protégé Radek, the renegade son who had bitten the hand which had, metaphorically speaking, fed him for years, approached the German party leadership after the Chemnitz congress with a collection of documents enumerating the financial irregularities Radek was alleged to have committed in Poland between 1905 and 1908—thefts of books from comrades, theft of a watch, diversion of party funds in an irregular manner, and the like. They emphasised that these were the reasons for his expulsion from the Polish party, although a lot of the material referred to the distant past. Thus, the next congress of the SPD, held in Jena in 1913, had to spend a good deal of its time on the Radek case. The party executive now got its revenge on the irritating gadfly of the Göppingen incident of the previous year. A decision was reached that any member of a fraternal party expelled for dishonourable conduct should be ineligible for membership of the German party The ruling was to be applied retroactively to Radek, and, on the basis of this specially created *lex* Radek, the culprit was solemnly expelled from the SPD, despite the protests of his friend Pannekoek.

With the Jena decision of 1913, ruin stared Radek in the face. Disliked in any case by the party majority for his extreme radicalism, he now found himself treated as a moral leper by those who had been his closest associates. It was impossible to conceive at the time that five years later the mortal enemies of 1913, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Radek, would jointly preside over the foundation of a new party. Radek wrote a powerfully worded pamphlet, *The Reckoning*, privately circulated for members of the party, defending himself vigorously, and the usual thing happened: some old friends deserted him demonstratively, as did Paul Lensch; others, such as Pannekoek and Konrad Haenisch, stood by him. Early in 1914, the traditional court of honour appointed in such cases by the various wings of the Russian and Polish marxist movements sat in Paris and decided unanimously in favour of Radek. Among the judges was Lunacharsky. Lenin and Trotsky made additional separate statements in his favour. Normally the whole case would have gone back to the German party for reconsideration of its earlier decision, but the outbreak of war stopped this. For the great majority of German socialists, Radek remained a marked man.

ON the outbreak of war, Radek, who defiantly had moved to Berlin after his expulsion from the SPD, found himself in a no man's land, separated from his former friends the Berlin Poles, looked on as an unreliable ally by Lenin, and, with the decision of the SPD to support the German war effort, one of a small handful of internationalist revolutionaries opposing the war. His only foothold was the group in Bremen.

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He decided to establish a stronghold of anti-patriotic revolutionary marxism for the German socialist anti-war opposition by using his Swiss friends. Robert Grimm's *Berner Tagwacht* became for some years the mouthpiece of Radek, Pannekoek, and the Russian bolsheviks then in Switzerland. Radek left Germany for Switzerland, as the German papers drew the attention of the authorities to the unpatriotic attitude of the Austrian national, the notorious expellee from the SPD. One cannot emphasise strongly enough to what extent Lenin's following had melted away in these months. Their intransigence had already isolated the bolsheviks in the months before the war, and they were widely regarded as a sect destined to rapid extinction. The immense wave of patriotism flooding Europe in August 1914 had swept even many bolshevik emigrés with it. Radek was practically the only non-Russian emigré in Switzerland who came to adopt more or less the same attitude as Lenin was gradually developing—one that was not to be found ready made in the sacred scriptures of Marx and Engels.

He still was looked at askance by many German socialists on personal grounds. At the famous Zimmerwald Conference of September 1915, where he belonged to the tiny minority within a minority which supported Lenin, the German anti-war social democrats refused to sign the manifesto if Radek were allowed to add his signature, and Hanecki, the leader of the Warsaw split of 1912, signed instead. A few months earlier, at another Swiss anti-war conference, his presence as an emissary of Lenin had been deeply resented, again on personal grounds. 'Clara Zetkin as well as other delegates who knew him were far from pleased when Karl Radek . . . would come and sit with us. We knew him too well as a despicable character to want him as a member', wrote one of the participants 25 years later.[1]

In 1914 and 1915 Radek was still writing for various anti-war socialist papers outside the bolshevik camp, but moving closer to the small group round Lenin. There was still one question of immense importance to him as an old member of the Polish marxist group: his opposition to the demand for the restoration of pre-partition Poland, and to the use of slogans of national self-determination in general as an auxiliary to the revolutionary socialist struggle. To this he was to cling for years to come, and over this issue he crossed swords with Lenin again and again. He disliked any proposals to break up the Austrian empire into national states, and dreamed instead of a free federation of the peoples of the Danubian lands which already formed a large economic unit fit for socialist transformation. He derided the Easter 1916 rebellion in Dublin as a puerile *putsch*. When the Zimmerwald manifesto of September 1915 had launched the slogan of national self-determination, Radek bitterly attacked the concept in the *Berner Tagwacht*, as well as in the Polish paper of his Warsaw group.

[1] T. Sender, *Autobiography of a German Rebel* (London, 1940), p. 63.

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AT first, in his profound disappointment over the newly adopted patriotic attitude of old friends, such as Haenisch and Lensch, and of revered teachers, such as Plekhanov and Parvus, Radek had been sceptical about the prospects of a European workers' revolution. When Trotsky met him in Switzerland after August 1914, he was shocked by Radek's pessimism. It was no good, Radek said, contradicting everything he had written for years; the forces of production were not yet mature enough! Reacting against Radek's gloom, Trotsky went out of his way to emphasise in his famous pamphlet *The War and the International* that the war was nothing but a revolt of the overripe forces of production against the straitjacket imposed by private property and the institution of the national state. Under Lenin's influence, Radek's black mood in time passed, and in 1916, when Radek's Bremen followers decided to launch a left-wing socialist weekly, *Arbeiterpolitik*, Lenin's call for a definite split in the International, and for the creation of a separate party of the genuine revolutionaries, was echoed in Bremen. Through Radek's contributions to the journal, the nearest approach to a Leninist faction in wartime Germany was established in Bremen, with some sympathising groups in Hamburg.

When in 1917 the German SPD majority expelled all the oppositionists, pacifists and revolutionaries alike, the Luxemburg group, the Spartacists, stayed within the large new party of the opposition, the USPD, as a ginger group. Radek's Bremen group, in intransigent style, stayed outside. Radek could draw some satisfaction from the fact that at the founding congress of the new party, in the discussion between Kautsky's ' social pacifism ' and the Spartacus speakers, Spartacus drew heavily on Radek's pre-war writings on imperialism as the best formulation of a revolutionary policy. There were cries of protest from the anti-Spartacus majority—' We are not having a Radek debate today, are we? '—which showed how Radek's invisible presence still stirred up controversy.

The doctrine of the labour aristocracy originally developed by Pannekoek in his Bremen days was taken over by the bolsheviks immediately after the outbreak of war; it supplied in marxist terms an explanation for the wave of patriotism that had swept over the European labour movement. Radek, by dividing the countries into those where the socialist parties had remained true to internationalism and those where they had turned patriotic, and by discovering that the purity of the socialist faith as preserved in Russia and in Italy was due to the absence of a labour aristocracy in those countries, prepared the way for the great change in Lenin's thinking. Up to 1914 Lenin had assumed that socialism would arrive first in advanced countries. During the war years, he gradually came round to the idea that a backward country such as Russia, blessed with the absence of a treacherous labour aristocracy, might lead the way in the great European revolution to come.

The agreement made with the German minister in Berne for the return

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to Russia of the bolshevik emigrés had to have a specially drafted clause to include Radek, who, in possession of an Austrian passport, was not officially defined as a refugee. He was the one non-Russian member of the small party of revolutionaries that set out from Switzerland to Sweden in April 1917.

WHEN they arrived in Sweden Radek stayed on together with Vorovsky and Hanecki, these three forming a kind of bolshevik foreign bureau. Their efforts were twofold; first, to give an account of Russian developments from the bolshevik angle, intended particularly for the German anti-war groups and therefore written in German. Radek, the experienced journalist and linguist, was the driving force in two publications started for this purpose: *Bote der Russischen Revolution*, and *Russische Korrespondenz Prawda* (a duplicated sheet); these were imported into Germany legally. The trio was also supposed to supply information and, if possible, funds to the bolshevik organisation in Russia. As Stockholm had been chosen for a conference of the official social democratic parties of Europe, as well as for the third conference of the Zimmerwald movement, Radek had his hands full.

The position of the trio changed completely when, with the October Revolution, they became no longer the foreign representatives of a small group of extremists in Russia, but some sort of unofficial ambassadors of the new Russian government, and behaved as such. The German social democrats, delighted by the overthrow of the pro-Ally Kerensky government, reckoning with a separate peace and a one-front war from now on, sent the inevitable Parvus with official congratulations to the Stockholm trio, the ambassadors of the new Russia. They made it clear to the SPD that they would welcome demonstrations in Germany in favour of the Soviet peace offer. In embryonic form, there appears for the first time a divergence between Soviet foreign policy and the course for world revolution. Rosa Luxemburg bitterly resented the overtures of the bolsheviks to the SPD and their negotiations with Parvus, and said so in her Spartacus letters. The bolshevik policy, to her mind, did harm to the nascent communist movement in Germany.

IT was at this time, on 12 November, 1917, that Counsellor Riezler, at the German legation in Stockholm, sent a report on Radek to the German Chancellor: 'The most energetic and most talented of these [the bolshevik representatives in Stockholm] is the Pole Sobelsohn, well known to German social democrats from his German past, who usually goes by the pseudonym Karl Radek. As a student, he is supposed to have stolen books. . . . He is described as being quite unscrupulous but very clever, and extremely talented as an author; and it is said that in spite of all his ideological principles, he is not deaf to opportunist considerations. For the moment his industriousness and his knowledge

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of German politics—he is well informed even about secret events—should assure respect in Petrograd for his ideas and suggestions.' [2]

The victory of the October revolution, which the Stockholm bolsheviks had witnessed from afar, filled Radek with exuberant self-confidence. In the years before the war, he, an outsider in the German movement, rejected by his old masters and teachers who had done their best to discredit him, had thrown in his lot with the small group of intransigents who had all the other socialist groups of Russia in a united front against them on the eve of war. Now this splinter group was master of Russia and he was to be a member of the ruling team, with the all important task to help on the good work of the world revolution in the key country, Germany, a task for which his past well qualified him. When Radek, soon after the revolution, went from Stockholm to Russia, a country he had never seen before and which was to become his home for the rest of his life, he went in a spirit of exuberant hope. He and his associates had been proved right. He was at once attached to the people's commissariat for foreign affairs, which was then difficult to distinguish from a bureau of international revolutionary propaganda, and edited propaganda papers to revolutionise German and Austrian prisoners of war and to subvert, if possible, the German armies facing Russia on Germany's Eastern front. The impact of the Russian Revolution was strong enough to turn prisoners of war to communism; there were among them the German Ernst Reuter, the Croatian n.c.o. Josip Broz, the Hungarian Bela Kun, to give the names of some future communist leaders who emerged from the prisoner of war camps.

When Radek, in his capacity as deputy commissar for foreign affairs, went to Brest Litovsk with Trotsky, he created a sensation by his recklessness and flagrant provocative breach of all diplomatic conventions. In full view of the German generals and diplomats he started distributing his subversive propaganda material among the German soldiers present. Since, moreover, the Germans looked on him as a renegade Austrian subject who had gone over to the Russian enemy, the sight could hardly have been more infuriating. Geared as he and all the Polish social democrats of his persuasion were to the idea of the overriding importance of the imminent world revolution, it is not surprising that Radek was among the chief antagonists of Lenin's policy over the Brest Litovsk peace treaty; so was Dzerzhinski—at least at first—and Unshlikht, so was their party in Poland, so were Rosa Luxemburg, Marchlewski, and Jogiches in Germany. The priority of the needs of the German revolution over those of the Russian was so deeply ingrained in all of them that their common opposition to Lenin's policy united them across the national frontiers.

IN October 1918, when the last-minute attempts of the German monarchy to make far-reaching concessions on constitutional reform

[2] Z. A. B. Zeman (ed.), *Germany and the Revolution in Russia, 1915–1918* (London, 1958), p. 81.

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revealed to every observer the desperate position of Imperial Germany, Radek made a speech in the Michelson factory in Moscow which indicated in what world of fantasy he, the acknowledged expert on German affairs, was living after having been away from Germany for the four years of war. He spoke to a Russian audience and thus his references to the German working class movement as 'our old leader', 'our older brother', 'who lead the international proletariat to victory' were quite sincerely meant. The emphasis was on the idea that the Germans would be in the lead, and the common enemy would be the Allies, with whom there would be a merciless struggle.

There is no doubt whatever that in October 1918 Radek quite genuinely believed that within a few months a spartacist Germany and a bolshevik Russia would be united in a revolutionary war against the Allies: 'From the Volga to the Rhine there will be a single red front of the proletarian revolution'[3]—stirring words which evoked stormy applause from his audience. He was confident that the Imperial government would be unable to solve the vital questions of peace and bread, and thus German communism, however weak at the moment, would conquer the masses even more rapidly than the bolsheviks had done in 1917, and from Germany the spark would fly to France and Italy, while there was no chance, he regretfully admitted, of a revolution in the near future in Britain and the United States.

When the news of the German November revolution reached Moscow, Radek at once tried to establish contact with the new Social-Democratic government. On Russian initiative the Berlin Workers' and Soldiers' Council invited a Soviet delegation to attend the national congress of German soviets to be held in December 1918. Although Radek had had ample opportunities to meet the USPD leaders who now sat in a coalition with the SPD in the new government—in Zimmerwald, in Kienthal, and in Stockholm—he was carried away in one of his recurrent moods of recklessness to announce in an open radio message to the German foreign minister, an USPD man, that he and his team were bringing trained agitators along to subvert the Allied prisoners of war in Germany. This, quite naturally, horrified the USPD leaders, who wanted anything but to become embroiled with the Allies as sponsors of bolshevik propaganda. The Soviet delegation was told not to come, and was turned back at the crossing point on the order of the German government.

However, Radek was not to be discouraged by the treacherous Kautskyites of the USPD. The Soviet emissary Radek turned into the Austrian prisoner of war Sobelsohn, who, together with the German prisoner of war Ernst Reuter—the future mayor of West Berlin—managed to get into Berlin. He did not bother to attend the national congress of German soviets, which was drawing to an end, but immediately established contact with some of his old Bremen associates, and then with the Spartacus leaders.

[3] E. Drahn and S. Leonhard, *Unterirdische Literatur* (Berlin, 1920), p. 149.

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His Bremen friends, who, like Lenin and Radek himself, thought only of the creation of a purely communist party, and of breaking with the Kautskyites, threatened that they would form a new revolutionary party with or without Spartacus. As it happened, the USPD leaders had just come into collision with the SPD, had left the government and gone into opposition. For Spartacus, hitherto a ginger group in the USPD with full freedom of propaganda, to break away just at this time seemed about the worst possible moment to choose. Nobody would understand the necessity for two left-wing socialist opposition parties. That, in these circumstances, the Communist Party (KPD) was formed, was to a great extent due to Radek's appearance in Germany and to the pressure of his Bremen group.

THE application of the Russian emigré tactics of creating theoretically pure communist groups by splits and breakaways had disastrous consequences for the whole development of the German labour movement at a time when the masses were for once in a militant mood as they had never been before and were never to be again. If Radek can be described as the true founder of the KPD, he was also responsible for its being a small splinter group which was not even entirely revolutionary and marxist, but largely syndicalist with a marxist minority. Now he met again his old teachers who in 1912 had become his enemies, and who still had many serious reservations concerning bolshevism.

It must have been an extremely strained meeting. Radek and the Spartacus leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Leo Jogiches had not exchanged a word since the break of 1912; a few weeks before Rosa Luxemburg had penned a scathing indictment of many features of the bolshevik revolution, which, however, had not been published. How would the former pupil who had thrown in his lot with Lenin be able to cooperate with the leaders of the German extreme left? It was peculiarly painful to Rosa Luxemburg that it was precisely a former member of her old team, Dzerzhinski, who was in charge of the red terror which she abhorred from the bottom of her heart.

Yet Rosa Luxemburg was so carried away by the phenomenon of a spontaneous movement which had thrown up soviets without guidance from any political party that she jettisoned all her traditional beliefs concerning the value of democracy. In her criticism of the bolshevik revolution she had reaffirmed her faith in democracy, in a parliament whose composition would reflect the mood of the nation, giving the last Duma as a striking example. Under the pressure of her associates, and bewitched by the phenomenon of soviets springing up on German soil, she broke away from her pre-war programme of radical socialist democracy; at the end of 1918 she had lost her moorings and was hopelessly adrift.

Radek's speech at the KPD foundation congress emphasised the close links between the German and the Russian revolutions. What he had said

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to a Moscow audience in October he repeated before his audience in Berlin—how the German movement was the older brother, how Soviet practice was the practical application of German Marxism, how the pre-war discussions in German social democracy had stimulated the bolsheviks. In the new International to come Radek optimistically forecast, no individual party would enjoy the dominant position the SPD had had in the Second International; it would be a federation of equal partners. As to foreign policy, the front against the Allies was sharply defined. The possibility of revolutionary contamination would deter the Allies from intervention against a communist Germany, and Radek indulged in fantasies of a combined Russian-German Red Army fighting on the Rhine and in the Urals. He admitted that the vital issue of peace would not play the part in Germany it had done in Russia, but the difficulties of food supply, unemployment, the high cost of living—out of these conditions German communism would rise! Illusory as this prospect was, the congress was swept by utopian visions of a millennium round the corner.

Hardly had this congress of dreamers and visionaries come to an end when trouble started in Berlin. In incredible confusion, some blanquist-minded groups among the Berlin trade unionists who had just failed to reach agreement with Spartacus, came out on the streets and staged a chaotic, leaderless, hopelessly muddled armed rebellion, proclaiming the overthrow of the government. In this crisis Radek rose to the situation and showed the hard-headed commonsense he was again and again to show when faced by a practical challenge. He advised the communist leaders to do their utmost to bring the rebellion to an end and to issue a slogan of peaceful action—' New elections for the soviets '. Instead, Liebknecht actually joined the rebels, and Rosa Luxemburg, carried away by the romantic delusion that one must never let armed workers down, however idiotically they may behave, spoke out in their defence, repeating her theme that the masses had been heroic and only their leaders had proved inadequate. Her belief in the alchemy of the spontaneous movement of the masses, ' who never err ', had led her into a web of contradictions and confusions which excluded a realistic appraisal of the situation. Of the three leaders, Radek comes out as the only practical politician.

In the anti-communist hysteria which followed the chaotic disorders of January 1919, and whose victims Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg tragically became, there was a widespread belief that Radek had been sent expressly from Russia to stir up violence. A price was offered by an anti-bolshevik organisation for his capture and in February 1919 he was arrested. After what had happened to Liebknecht and Luxemburg —and was going to happen to Jogiches a few weeks later—he expected to be put to death on the spot. Instead, contrary to all expectations, the year 1919 when he was held a prisoner in Berlin, turned out to be the most important year of his life. It was in these seemingly unpropitious circumstances that he reached his full stature.

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PAUL LEVI AND THE COMINTERN

Helmut Gruber

ON 14 February, 1930 an unusual assortment of people came to pay their last respects at the funeral of Paul Levi. Levi's life as jurist, left-wing activist, elected official, and man of the world was symbolically represented by the motley assemblage. The untimeliness and mysteriousness of the death—Levi either fell or jumped from a window while in a state of delirium during an illness—heightened the atmosphere. Mixed with delegations of workers carrying red flags there was a sprinkling of Berlin high society; alongside left-wing journalists and writers stood fur-clad young women more than one of whom could have worn widow's weeds. Leaders of the Socialist party intoned memorials befitting a comrade-in-arms who could now safely be classified as a hero of the cause. In spite of the differences separating those present, one thought was common: a unique and complicated personality had passed away.[1]

At forty-six Levi was at the height of a brilliant legal career, but his more significant reputation as a leader of the left had long passed its high-water mark. During the early years of the Weimar Republic Levi had occupied a commanding position in left-wing politics. Following the assassinations of Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, and Leo Jogiches, he fell heir to the leadership of the Communist party (KPD). He attempted to follow the policies of Luxemburg, whom he greatly admired, by transforming the KPD from a sect into a mass party. In 1921 his refusal to sanction the abortive March Action suddenly brought him into prominence in the international communist movement. In two brilliant pamphlets Levi attacked 'Bakuninist' opportunism among the KPD leaders and authoritarian tendencies within the Comintern executive. This challenge to his own party and the Comintern represented the last attempt to uphold Luxemburg's ideas against the spread of Leninist centralism, and was at the same time the first open warning against the Russification of the Comintern. Levi was expelled from the KPD and worked his way back to the SPD, of which he had been a member before the war. One of the SPD's few internal critics, he was without influence over its policy; isolated on its left-wing, he fiercely criticised now the Comintern dominated by the Soviet Union and now the timidity and reformism within his own party.

PAUL LEVI was born in 1883, the son of a well-to-do Jewish manufacturer in Hechingen, Hohenzollern.[2] After graduating from

1 This account is based on the reminiscences of Heinz Pol, a former German journalist and friend of Levi. For a discussion of the mysterious circumstances of Levi's death, see Leopold Schwarzschild, 'Paul Levi', *Das Tage-Buch*, 15 February 1930, 250.

2 For information regarding Levi's early life I am indebted to his nephew Franz Herz of New York. Mr Herz was also generous in letting me use his collection of Levi's complete published works and several of his manuscript notes.

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the Gymnasium in Stuttgart he attended the universities of Berlin and Grenoble and received a doctoral degree in jurisprudence at Heidelberg. Between 1907 and 1914 he practised law in Frankfurt and served as an SPD city councillor. Soon after the outbreak of the war he was drafted into the army, and on his discharge in 1917 went to Zürich, where he associated with Russian revolutionaries and the emigré international left.

Several incidents highlight Levi's transformation from socialist into communist. In February 1914, when Rosa Luxemburg stood before the court in Frankfurt accused of inciting the public against the state, Levi acted as her attorney. He was already her supporter politically, and soon joined in her attempts to make German social-democracy more militant. Levi quickly became one of the most prominent members of the younger generation of radical socialists and, although in uniform, contributed along with Luxemburg, Liebknecht, Klara Zetkin and Franz Mehring to the *Spartakusbriefe* published by Leo Jogiches after 1916.

Little is known of his activities during the troubled times of the November Revolution in 1918 and the disturbances of early 1919. He had moved to Berlin, was a member of the *Spartakusbund* central committee, and acted as its spokesman at the founding congress of the KPD. The most important question discussed there concerned participation in the elections for the National Assembly. Levi denounced the National Assembly as an 'instrument of the counter-revolution' but thought the party should take part in the elections in order to work against it from within and use it as a propaganda forum. Although Luxemburg and Liebknecht supported this proposal, it was defeated by a vote of sixty-two to twenty-three. Utopian and syndicalist elements, opposed to compromise with any bourgeois institution and committed to direct action, predominated in the KPD at this time, and it is a sign of Levi's maturity that he was allied with the elders of the party against premature action.

In the spring of 1919 the unstable extremist majority of the KPD forced it into direct action, ending in abysmal defeat, in the course of which its three ablest leaders, Luxemburg, Liebknecht and Jogiches were murdered. The mantle of leadership fell on Levi at a time when the party was all but crushed and had been thoroughly discredited among the workers, even those who stood on the left of the Independent Socialist party (USPD). It is much to his credit that in the midst of the disharmony that threatened to disintegrate the KPD he was able to find means of reviving and revitalising it. Levi saw the movement as having lost the battle in 1918–1919 but not the war, and proceeded to carry out his plan of reconstruction by taking two separate but related paths. One lay in the direction of broadening the base of the party, and for this purpose the USPD with its 800,000 members, many of whom were veterans of serious political and economic struggles, was ready made.[3] Levi was reasonably certain that the USPD leadership

[3] At that time the USPD was a powerful organisation with 55 daily newspapers, 81 Reichstag deputies and a decisive influence in many trade unions.

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had lost the confidence of many of the rank and file and he sought to create the impression that the KPD had a purposefulness and will not to be found elsewhere on the left. The membership of the USPD could not be attracted by a party which had the reputation of being dominated by putschists, and so Levi simultaneously chose the second path of purifying the KPD.

A year before Lenin was to characterise left-wing communism as an 'infantile disorder', Levi denounced it as the main threat to the development of broad-based communist parties. On 22 March, 1919, two days after the Soviet Republic was proclaimed in Budapest, he attacked the putschist nature of the Hungarian revolution.[4] He considered Radek's claim that defeat strengthened the class consciousness of the Hungarian workers an example of the fallacious thinking responsible for an adventurism that was discrediting the international communist movement among the workers. Levi characterised the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Republic as a premature revolution brought on by the irrational zeal of utopian radicals who forced the KPD to participate in an action doomed to failure.[5] He particularly deplored the taint of irresponsibility that attached itself to the communist parties involved.

If the USPD was to be won over, the KPD would have to be cleansed of its syndicalist elements. Syndicalism, however, was embraced by a majority of the KPD's rank and file, and Levi was forced to use draconian measures. At its second congress in October 1919, he mounted a vehement attack, enumerating the crimes of the syndicalists: their anti-parliamentarism, their desire to replace existing labour unions by 'one big union', their notion that the revolution must develop and be fought only on an economic plane, their direct action formula based on general strikes.

HAVING diagnosed the illness that threatened to destroy the party, Levi prescribed a remedy which a majority of the rank and file were bound to reject. To the assembled delegates he presented a carefully prepared list of 'guidelines' about communist principles and tactics which amounted to the rejection of syndicalism, acceptance of the contention that revolutionary ferment in Germany had subsided, and concentration on peaceful methods such as participation in parliament and the existing trade unions. 'At the moment', Levi asserted, 'the proletariat is not concerned with how it should exercise its political power but with how it can attain political power'. The guidelines were, in effect, an ultimatum, for they concluded with the proposition that all who refused to abide by them after a short period of consideration should be expelled. They were adopted by a narrow majority, and Levi's programme appeared to have triumphed. But in fact the party was split, for the congress delegates were not representative of the sentiment of the party's majority; delegations hostile to Levi had been

[4] 'Die Lehren der Ungarischen Revolution', *Die Internationale*, 24 June 1920.
[5] Ibid. 4 August 1919.

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prevented from presenting their position, and discussion had been curtailed. Levi was no doubt correct in curbing the KPD's unstable elements in preparation for building a mass party, but the dictatorial means by which he did so provided a dangerous precedent which was later to be followed by the Comintern in dealing with the KPD.

Levi's measures at the congress served to weaken the KPD almost to the point of dissolution; membership fell from 107,000 to less than half that number. In April 1920 the opposition formed the German Communist Workers party (KAPD) which, although only a sect, helped frustrate Levi's efforts to build a mass party that would have the unqualified support of the Comintern. Organisationally and ideologically the KPD was at its weakest just at the moment when the whole left was to be confronted by a serious challenge from the extreme right.

On 13 March, 1920 the Erhardt brigade under General von Lüttwitz occupied government offices in Berlin and proclaimed Wolfgang Kapp chancellor. The government decided on flight and the left was momentarily stunned; the KPD was driven into utter confusion. Levi was in jail and the party *Zentrale* was under the leadership of August Thalheimer. When the trade unions responded to the putsch with a general strike, the KPD leaders decided to remain aloof on the ground that it would be an error to support the 'social-democratic counter-revolutionaries' against the 'reactionary counter-revolutionaries'. Only after it became clear that the local organisations were refusing to carry out the *Zentrale's* directive and were collaborating with USPD and SPD strikers, did the leaders adjust their line.

Levi was incapacitated but not idle. On 16 March he wrote a long letter to the KPD central committee denouncing its policy of inaction and criticising its inability to give leadership to a mass action of the proletariat.[6] His sharpest remarks were directed against the party leaders for failing to advance demands which would have served as the strike's immediate goal. Having rebuked the KPD leaders for what they did not do, he then analysed the errors of the slogans they had issued once they supported the strike. '"Soviet republic" and "congress of soviets" are not demands for whose fulfilment one can work, particularly since they are not directed to the enemy. "Down with the military dictatorship", "down with bourgeois democracy" likewise are not strike demands but phrases'. Levi concluded that by its tactical errors the *Zentrale* had let a revolutionary situation pass by; had the KPD provided the strike with a political direction, the SPD sooner or later would have withdrawn its support and allowed the KPD to demonstrate to the proletariat where its real leadership lay.

The Kapp putsch was a test for the KPD and for Levi. Weakened and confused by the split of the previous October, the party floundered badly and finally resorted to empty rhetoric. Levi's analysis demonstrated his ability to assess situations quickly and correctly. The first

[6] *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, II (1920), 149.

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Reichstag elections in June 1920 appeared to support his strategy for reconstructing the KPD. Although he and Zetkin were elected, the KPD polled no more than 442,000 votes. The USPD, which Levi considered the future source of communist strength, received 4·9 million votes. The SPD vote declined to 5·6 million from the 11·5 million polled in 1919. In July Levi left for the second congress of the Comintern in Moscow with high hopes of winning approval for his programme. Four representatives of the USPD were invited as observers.

In the discussion of Levi's report to the Congress, his actions were accepted as sound.[7] But although the Comintern executive appeared to agree with his evaluation of the KPD and its future course, a conflict arose over the KAPD that was to become irreconcilable. Otto Rühle had been invited to the congress as KAPD representative, and Zinoviev proposed that the KAPD be admitted to the Comintern as a voting member. In opposing this proposal Levi pointed out that two mass parties, the French Socialists and the USPD, were given only a consultative voice, whereas full membership was being offered the KAPD; the syndicalist KAPD was not a communist party, and the masses of the USPD who were prepared to accept the conditions for membership laid down by the Comintern would resent the inclusion of irresponsible left-wing elements in the International.[8] Levi's carefully laid plans for the creation of a mass party and his reputation as leader of the communist movement in Germany were at stake. He had ousted the syndicalists from the KPD in order to attract the USPD membership, and now those same syndicalists were to be admitted on a preferential basis to the international organisation. When the issue was brought to a vote Levi lost by twenty-five to five. But this did not settle the issue, because Rühle left the congress in anger over the presence of French and German socialists and refused to return. In November the KAPD was accepted into the Comintern by its executive committee as a sympathising party with consultative voice. Levi and the KPD were informed of this action only indirectly and then without comment.[9]

THE issue between Levi and the Comintern was buried in the events that followed, but the grievance remained. Levi's dissatisfaction appeared to go beyond the dispute over KAPD membership to the nature and organisation of the Comintern itself. He had already realised that it was in process of becoming an instrument of the Russian party,

7 In the light of Levi's later condemnation by the Comintern for ' breach of discipline ' it is interesting to note that in his report Levi commended the communists who had disobeyed the *Zentrale's* instructions during the Kapp putsch. His praise for this breach of party discipline was endorsed by the Comintern executive.

8 Reported by L. O. Frossard, ' Zur Krise in der deutschen Kommunistischen Partei ', *Sowjet*, 1 June 1921. Levi's speech to the second world congress is not recorded in the *Protokoll*, a foreword to which explains that a shortage of secretarial personnel made omissions and errors unavoidable.

9 Levi, *Der Beginn der Krise in der Kommunistischen Partei und Internationale* (Remscheid, 1921), p. 11, and Jane Degras (ed.), *The Communist International 1919–1943* (London, 1956), I, 206.

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but his concern about the direction of the international movement took second place to the completion of his plans in Germany. At the USPD congress at Halle in September 1920, called to decide whether the party should adhere to the Comintern, the majority voted for membership, and in December united with the KPD to form the United Communist party (VKPD); the minority decided to keep the USPD intact. Levi now commanded a mass party of some 350,000 members along with dozens of newspapers, numerous trade union positions, and a considerable number of deputies in the Reichstag.

The VKPD now had a substantial following and Levi was not prepared to risk its future in premature actions. He decided to proceed with caution, for he had inherited Rosa Luxemburg's doubts about the revolutionary maturity of the masses and rejected the demands for revolutionary action made by the party's left wing. He hoped to win the sympathy of workers outside the VKPD by united struggles for realisable goals. With this aim in mind he (in collaboration with Radek) addressed an open letter to the trade unions, the SPD, the USPD and the KAPD; it was published in the *Rote Fahne* on 8 January 1921, in the name of the central committee, and proposed a joint campaign to raise wages and unemployment allowances, to reduce the cost of living, to introduce workers' control over articles of prime necessity, to dissolve and disarm ' bourgeois defence organisations ' and create ' organisations of proletarian self-defence ', and to establish trade and diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia. This first attempt by any communist party to employ united front tactics met with complete failure, and the refusal of the non-communist left to accept the offer strengthened the position of the activists in the VKPD and had dire consequences for Levi's policy and position in the following months.

In February, Levi went as VKPD delegate to the congress of the Italian Socialist party (PSI) in Leghorn, which was to discuss affiliation to the Comintern. The Comintern was represented by Matthias Rakosi and Christo Kabakchiev who demanded as a condition of affiliation the expulsion of the right wing of the PSI and were supported by the radical Turin faction. Serrati, who led the party's substantial centre, justified the continued participation of the reformists on a variety of grounds. When it came to the vote the left wing was defeated, and withdrew from the congress to found the Italian Communist party. Levi had come down heavily on the side of Serrati. He was critical of the Comintern delegates for interfering in the affairs of the Italian party (a charge which might also have been brought against him), accusing them openly of attempting mechanically to split the party, being concerned only to bar Serrati, and all those to the right of him, from the Comintern. On their return to Russia via Germany, Rakosi and Kabakchiev called him to account before a meeting of the VKPD's central committee. Levi defended himself by enumerating the special characteristics and needs of mass parties.

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> But the comrades [Rakosi and Kabakchiev] did not, I believe, fully realise that a mass party has a different spiritual structure from, for instance, the illegal Russian party, which in its own fashion has performed marvellously. In a mass party splits cannot be undertaken on the basis of resolutions; they can be undertaken only on the basis of political experience. . . . We know that splits were and are necessary, but we must avoid splits for which we assume the odium because the masses do not know that a matter of life and death is involved.[10]

Rakosi and Kabakchiev, not to be deflected from justifying the Leghorn split, demanded a vote from the central committee condemning Levi's actions. A resolution to that effect was passed by twenty-eight votes to twenty-three, whereupon Levi, Zetkin, and three others resigned from the central committee.

In one respect Levi's analysis of the Italian situation was correct. The split certainly was not understood by the masses and in the months following the Leghorn congress further disillusionment and widespread apathy gripped the left-wing parties and led to numerous defections. But he failed or refused to see that during the strikes and occupation of the factories in 1920 the PSI had clearly demonstrated its impotence and that the responsibility for this rested largely on the reformists in the party bureacracy, trade unions and parliament. So long as the reformists remained in the PSI it would be ineffective; if they were expelled the morale of the whole left would be seriously weakened and opposition to the growing fascist movement would collapse. This was the dilemma of the Italian left which neither Levi nor the Comintern delegates were able to appreciate. Levi appears to have been more concerned with the mechanics of the split than with the reasons for carrying it out. In the activities of Rakosi and Kabakchiev he may well have seen the long arm of the Comintern executive which threatened to interfere in the affairs of his own party.

FOLLOWING his resignation from the central committee Levi set out for a vacation although serious trouble was brewing in the VKPD. He left behind him a party that in spite of repeated previous setbacks had attained a significant following and influence among the German masses and the reputation as a leader among the communist parties of the world. His accomplishment during the past two years had been considerable and yet his personal position had been undermined. A vociferous faction of the VKPD desired to undo his handiwork; repeated friction between him and the Comintern executive left deep wounds on both sides. In March precipitate action in central Germany brought Levi's differences with his own party and with the Comintern dramatically into the open. He was recalled to Germany and witnessed the ensuing developments as a horrified and impotent bystander.

10 *Beginn der Krise*, p. 22.

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The 'March Action' began in the mining area of Mansfeld in Saxony, where the KPD had the support of a large majority of the workers.[11] On 16 March Hörsing, the SPD district governor, sent police to Mansfeld with orders to occupy the mines in order to prevent thefts of coal by the miners. The miners offered armed resistance and held out for several days against overwhelming odds. Almost immediately the more than 10,000 workers of the Leuna chemical works in neighbouring Halle joined the revolt, and within a week the VKPD's *Zentrale* called for a general strike. The party's appeal failed to move the masses; reckless propaganda by the party press and terrorist acts by party functionaries only increased their unwillingness to participate, and finally led to the occupation of factories by the police. By 31 March the action collapsed and the *Zentrale* called off the strike.

As the jails filled with strikers and the dead and wounded were counted, it became obvious that the VKPD had suffered a serious defeat. The party had assumed that the resistance of the Mansfeld miners would move the whole working class to armed resistance, but there was little enthusiasm for revolution even among the communist workers. Secret documents published by the social-democratic *Vorwärts* in November 1921 revealed how the VKPD leadership had tried to 'manipulate' an armed uprising.[12] They indicated that the March Action was a putsch operated behind the scenes by the party *Zentrale*. At a meeting of the regional committee for central Germany convened at Halle on 19 March it had become clear that Hörsing's occupation of the mines would not arouse the German proletariat to action and that the decision was taken systematically to provoke the government into acts of repression against the workers. Consequently, carloads of munitions and railroad depots were dynamited and policemen were set upon and beaten. The reports also outlined the steps taken to convince the working class that it was under attack. In Halle and Breslau attempts were made to blow up the party headquarters. In Halle plans were laid to provoke disturbances during which two prominent KPD officials were to disappear, making it possible for the party to claim that they had been kidnapped by reactionary troops. Acts of violence were supplemented by propaganda issuing from *Zentrale* delegates, the local party press, and the *Rote Fahne*, with the claim that everywhere else in Germany the proletariat had risen in armed rebellion. Throughout Germany the *Zentrale* had

[11] In the electoral district of Halle the VKPD polled 204,000, the USPD 76,000 and the SPD 71,000 during the Prussian *Landtag* election of February 1921. This was the only district in which the VKPD had the support of a majority of the workers. Levi, *Unser Weg wider den Putschismus* (2d ed.; Berlin, 1921), p. 23.

[12] These documents were confiscated from Klara Zetkin as she crossed the German border on the way to the third world congress of the Comintern in June 1921. Legal action against the KPD leaders was instituted on 16 August. See *Vorwärts*, 28 November 1921. Despite the attempt by the *Zentrale* to characterise these documents as forgeries, Zetkin and others testified to their authenticity. A number of important officials resigned from the VKPD. The *Zentrale* finally released all the incriminating evidence in the now rare pamphlet *Die Enthüllungen zu den Märzkämpfen*.

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unsuccessfully attempted to use elements of the *Lumpenproletariat* to force the employed workers to join the general strike.

Those who followed the party directives had shed their blood, lost their jobs, and been arrested in an enterprise that appeared foolhardy and doomed from the outset to failure. In the light of Levi's efforts to build a mass party and to win the confidence of the non-communist workers by united front tactics, the March Action appears inexplicable, but less so if we take into account the intentions of the anti-Levi faction and, in particular, its desire to respond to the Comintern executive's encouragement of activist policies. Heinrich Brandler, August Thalheimer and Paul Frölich had taken over the leadership after Levi resigned in February, and were intent upon a programme of action. They branded Levi's united front policy as opportunist and sought to counteract it with a 'theory of the offensive'. The growing inflation, the struggle between the central and Bavarian governments over the disbanding of para-military groups, the French occupation of Düsseldorf for breaches of the disarmament provisions of the Versailles Treaty, and the scheduled plebiscite in Upper Silesia were interpreted as signs of an impending crisis which the party should anticipate and accelerate by leading the German proletariat to concerted action. This view of events seems to have been shared by Zinoviev and the Comintern executive; in the first days of March, Bela Kun, Poganyi and Guralski were dispatched from Moscow to galvanise the German left into action. With the aid and advice of Kun, plans were made by the VKPD leaders for an offensive to begin sometime after Easter.[13] In pressing the party to take the offensive, Kun was probably moved to abandon caution by news of the Kronstadt rising, which had brought the crisis in Russia to a climax.

IN the two months following the March Action the post-mortem in party circles turned into a full fledged critique of strategy and tactics.[14] The most serious attack on the VKPD and the Comintern executive appeared in two powerful pamphlets by Levi, which used the March Action as a point of departure for an analysis of the errors that were leading international communism into crisis.[15] Levi defended the publication of the first pamphlet, *Unser Weg*, on the grounds that the *Zentrale* had refused to hear him; open discussion alone could save

[13] Levi later claimed that the notion of an imminent crisis, including war between Britain and the United States, had been brought to the *Zentrale* by Kun. He recounted how Kun had first presented his fantasies to Zetkin on 10 March and repeated them to Levi on the 14th, and how the identical formulation had been presented by a party leader before a meeting of the central committee on 17 March. Levi, *Was ist das Verbrechen? Die Märzaktion oder die Kritik daran?* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 8–9, and *Unser Weg*, pp. 30–31.

[14] The *Zentrale*, however, stubbornly refused to admit its errors. At a meeting of the central committee in April the action was said to have advanced the revolution, and the theory of the offensive was endorsed. See 'Leitsatz X', *Internationale*, III (1921), 127.

[15] Levi, *Unser Weg* and *Was ist das Verbrechen?* The second pamphlet was Levi's unavailing defence before the party's central committee on 4 May 1921.

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communism in Germany. 'The mistakes and errors of the communists are just as much a part of the political experience of the proletariat as their merits. They can withhold neither the one nor the other from the masses, because the party exists for the sake of the proletariat and not vice versa'.

Levi attempted to show that the March Action was ill conceived because the theory of the offensive was not applicable to Germany at that time. He contrasted German conditions with those Lenin considered necessary before attempting to capture state power and concluded that the time was not ripe for action: the communist party did not constitute a majority of the revolutionary classes but only one-sixteenth of the organised proletariat; there was not a rising revolutionary wave, but growing passivity among the working class; and instead of the complete moral and political bankruptcy of the old coalition government, in Prussia the SPD had grown and polled twice as many votes as the other proletarian parties combined. For these reasons Levi considered the *Zentrale's* 'break with the past' in March disastrous. He declared that he had always supported the notion that the conditions for action could be created by political means but denounced the provocations of March in which workers' lives were sacrificed to create a revolutionary atmosphere as abhorrent and worthy of police spies, not of a proletarian party.

The March Action was 'the greatest Bakuninist putsch in history' characterised by the fight of unemployed against employed and communists against proletarians, and by the prominence of *Lumpenproletarians* and terrorists. Revolutionary sentiment in Germany was at an ebb, and the VKPD had artificially attempted to arouse the workers; the victims in Mansfeld, Hamburg, Halle, Essen and Mannheim had not moved the non-communist workers to join the general strike because the *Zentrale* had alienated them from the outset. Four-fifths of Germany's working class was given the alternative of denouncing their leaders or of being themselves denounced as enemies of the revolution. In desperation the *Zentrale* had turned to putschist methods. 'The unemployed were sent out as shock troops. They forced their way into the plants, here and there extinguished the furnaces and attempted to beat the workers out of the plants. It came to an open war of the communists against the workers.' Such tactics only served to destroy the bond that had existed between the employed workers and their unemployed comrades, and the latter, who had been forced to use methods usually adopted by the *Lumpenproletariat,* were declassed and added to the rootless and alienated stratum of society.

Levi's critical pamphlets did not stop with an analysis of the March Action but sought to unearth its underlying causes and to bring those responsible for it to judgment before the proletariat of Germany and the international movement. He placed the initial responsibility for the action on the Comintern executive and claimed that its dissatisfaction

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with German 'inaction' encouraged the most adventurist and irresponsible elements in the VKPD to plunge the party into a hazardous venture. The Comintern created its sorcerer's apprentice, he continued, and then stood by and allowed the crisis in the VKPD to run its disastrous course. Levi turned to an examination of the role and efficacy of the international organisation. The inadequacy of the leadership provided by the Comintern was due to its isolation from western Europe and its reliance on incompetent delegates for information and for the execution of its decisions.

> We believe that the dissatisfaction about these delegates is more or less the same in all the countries in which they are active. . . . They never work with, always behind the back of, and often against the *Zentrale* of the individual country. They have the confidence of Moscow, others don't. This is a system which must undermine all confidence in mutual endeavours on both sides, on the part of the executive as well as the member parties. These comrades are usually useless or insufficiently trusted to undertake political leadership. The result is a hopeless situation: the absence of political leadership from the centre. The only thing which the executive accomplishes in this respect is to issue appeals which come too late and papal bulls which come too soon. . . . The executive operates only as an arm of Russia extended beyond its borders—an impossible situation. The specific demand that all of this be changed, and that unqualified delegates must not take the leadership of the individual sections into their incompetent hands, the cry for political leadership and against a party police is not a demand for autonomy (*Unser Weg*, pp. 55–56).

Levi's two pamphlets did not call for a break with communism; they demanded a thorough reform of the VKPD and the Comintern. He was highly critical of the March Action but particularly embittered about the leaders in Berlin and Moscow who, having treated a mass party like an 'anarchist club' and recklessly fanned the flames of revolution, sought to blame 'defeatists' and 'saboteurs' in the VKPD for the fiasco. He saw only one remedy: an open and honest analysis of past errors as an accounting to the masses. The success of the communists in gaining a foothold within the working class had been virtually wiped out in March, and the trust and confidence of the workers would have to be won anew if the VKPD was to survive.

THE May issue of Levi's journal *Sowjet* was filled with analyses of the March Action in which leading communists gave Levi their support.[16] His future, however, was not to be decided in the German left-wing press but was dependent upon the outcome of the third world congress of the Comintern. On 4 May the VKPD had expelled him and the

[16] See particularly Klara Zetkin, 'Beiträge zur Märzaktion', Valeriu Marcu, 'Zur Krise der Kommunistischen Internationale', and Ernst Däumig, 'Ein Brief an die Zentrale der VKPD', *Sowjet*, III, 1 May 1921.

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Comintern congress upheld this decision on the grounds that his published attacks on the *Zentrale* had been a breach of discipline. Levi's expulsion was disposed of early in the congress, but the issues he had raised became the leitmotiv of the whole congress and led to stormy sessions. In the discussion on the report of the Comintern executive the Yugoslav delegate Markovic denounced those who attempted to make Levi the scapegoat for the March Action. If the expulsion of Levi for his error in publishing the pamphlets was just, he asked, then what punishment should be meted out to the *Zentrale* for the far greater crime of having recklessly led German workers to defeat and humiliation? In the debate on tactics Radek, the weathercock of Comintern policies, answered the question by describing Levi as a reformist and renegade of long standing, by carefully dissociating the Comintern executive from recent events in Germany, and by enumerating some errors of judgment by the *Zentrale*. The *Zentrale*, he declared, was guilty of failing to prepare the masses for action, of calling the masses to arms once the action had begun, and of being guided by the uniquely German theory of the offensive. He insisted that these were errors committed in good faith by party stalwarts, whereas Levi's revelations were the calumnies of a traitor. Klara Zetkin rose to Levi's defence; after expressing her contempt for Radek, she went on to implicate the Comintern in the crises of the Italian and German parties by portraying the disruptive influence of its delegates in these countries. She was convinced that Levi's critique had forced the VKPD into a necessary discussion of the theory and practice of the March Action and would prevent the party from repeating its errors. The German workers were in Levi's debt, she added, for they had a right to know the background of the errors committed in March, and Levi had encouraged them to demand this knowledge.[17]

The theses on tactics finally accepted by the congress contained many of the proposals in Levi's critique and were indistinguishable in their most important features from the policies Levi had pursued in the VKPD. The slogan adopted by the congress, 'To the masses!' echoed Levi's open letter and united-front tactics. Although the congress acclaimed the March Action as a step forward, its resolutions contradicted this face-saving formula; the Russian leaders in the Comintern appeared to have concluded that revolutions in western Europe were not likely in the near future. The door was left open for Levi to return to

[17] *Protocol III. Kongress*, pp. 289, 296–299, 299–300, 604. Before the congress Zetkin attempted to justify Levi's actions to Lenin. 'He [Levi] wrote the pamphlet in the same mood in which the legendary Roman hurled himself into the gaping abyss in the hope of saving the motherland at the sacrifice of his life. Levi's intentions were the best, the most unselfish. He meant to heal and not to destroy.' Lenin also appears to have been anxious to exonerate the Comintern for the German defeat. Zetkin recounts that during the congress he spoke to her of the theory of the offensive: 'It is an illusion, romanticism, nothing but romanticism. That's the very reason why it was invented in " the land of thinkers and poets ", with the assistance of Bela [Kun], who also belongs to a poetically endowed nation'. *My Recollections of Lenin* (Moscow, 1956), pp. 30–31, 37.

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the party as a chastened and obedient member. He was not to take the road to Canossa.

THE decisions taken by the Comintern congress did not end the crisis in the KPD (the V was dropped from the name in August 1921). As some of the more unsavoury aspects of the March Action were made public a number of important leaders and Reichstag deputies quit the party and joined the group gathering around Levi. In the wake of defeat the rank and file became disillusioned and left the party in large numbers, but a substantial nucleus stood firm and prevented total disintegration. The Comintern did its best to strengthen the right wing in the party, which subscribed to the united front policy, in order to forestall a further split.

In the twenties Levi's fears about the subservience of the KPD to a Moscow-dominated Comintern came true. During those years his political activity did not diminish, although its focus changed from leadership to topical and fundamental theoretical criticism of the national and international left that earned him the reputation of being the last of the Luxemburgists. Immediately after his expulsion from the KPD in 1921 he founded the *Kommunistische Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (KAG), whose purpose was to reform the KPD from without by freeing it of Russian influence and thereby gaining the confidence of the German workers. These ambitious and entirely unrealistic aims indicate that Levi was unable to understand or accept his loss of influence in the KPD. For a short time he maintained friendly relations with some former party comrades, but officially he was a renegade and an outcast. His search for a popular front of the whole proletariat led him in 1922 to join first the USPD and finally the SPD. Although he served as an SPD Reichstag deputy for the working-class district of Chemnitz-Zwickau from 1924 until his death, he was as isolated among the social democrats as he had been among the communists; it was his writings more than anything else that kept him in the political limelight. In 1922 and 1925 he edited and published Luxemburg's and Trotsky's critical appraisals of the Russian revolution which were received in the orthodox communist world as treasonable falsifications.[18] Until 1922 Levi continued publication of *Sowjet*, the title of which was changed in 1921 to *Unser Weg*. From 1923 he published and wrote the lead editorials of a bi-monthly, *Sozialistische Politik und Wirtschaft*, which was merged with *Der Klassenkampf* in 1928.

During these years Levi continued to call himself a communist and refused to follow the path of professional anti-bolshevism that many former party members had taken. His brand of communism was far different from, and in important aspects in direct opposition to, the Leninism practised in the Soviet Union and dominating the international

[18] Rosa Luxemburg, *Die Russische Revolution* (Berlin, 1922), and Leon Trotsky, *1917, Die Lehren der Revolution* (Berlin, 1925).

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movement. It had its roots in the traditions of west European social-democracy and descended direct from the ideas of Rosa Luxemburg. Levi's conception of communism did not crystallise until, freed from the responsibilities of leadership, he could devote himself to theoretical questions. The doctrines of Lenin and Luxemburg, he concluded, were valid for and applicable to widely differing historical and cultural circumstances.[19] He regarded Lenin's conception of the proletarian party as a homogeneous revolutionary elite able to lead large masses at the proper historical moment as an expression of the particular circumstances of Tsarist Russia typified by feudalism, absolutism, and the illegality of all working-class associations. In western Europe, on the other hand, the proletarian party must be shaped by the strengths and weaknesses of millions. Luxemburg was responding to these conditions when she demanded the gathering of all proletarians into one party in which there would be an interdependence and balance between the class consciousness of the masses spurring them to spontaneous action, and the volition of leaders. Her analysis formed the framework of Levi's thought and in his articles he dissociated the development of communism in Germany from Russian practices and experiences. He was equally unwilling to accept the Russian interpretation of the world situation. He insisted that capitalism was not in a process of decay, as Varga and other Comintern economists maintained, but had gained new strength since the war and that only the concerted action of the proletariat could bring about its demise. Many of his critical articles bear the stamp of bygone battles and controversies, but some are far above the level of topical polemics and make a valuable contribution to our understanding of German communism and the Comintern in the years between the wars.

LEVI was particularly prescient about the increasing dependence of the KPD on foreign direction. Time and again he berated the party for acting as apologist for Russia, and for allowing itself to be manipulated from the outside. He showed a remarkable insight into the disastrous policies, largely Russian-inspired, pursued by the KPD during the Ruhr battles in 1923, which had only discredited it further among the workers.

Levi was as critical of Soviet domestic policy as of its direction of the international movement. He condemned the delegates to the third Comintern congress for rubber-stamping Soviet policies instead of openly discussing developments such as NEP, which would have an important bearing on the international movement.[20] He considered the introduction of NEP a necessary retreat but wanted it to be understood that the concessions involved marked the triumph of peasant aspirations

19 Levi, 'Bei den Kommunisten', *Sozialistische Politik und Wirtschaft* (hereafter cited as *SPW*), 17 April, 1924.

20 'Nach dem III. Weltkongress', *Unser Weg*, August 1921.

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over the aims of the dynamic left wing of the Bolshevik party.[21] He appreciated the difficult position in which the Bolsheviks found themselves after Lenin's death and saw the need to meet emergencies with non-socialist expedients, but he criticised the Bolsheviks for repressing opinions and critiques that went beyond immediate crises to the future tasks of socialism. He considered the refusal to allow an opposition to arise a sign of the Russian party's deterioration and a serious obstacle to the attainment of socialism. Levi's most prophetic articles about the Soviet Union dealt with the incompatibility of peasant and worker interests, and predicted that future developments in Russia would lead to a violent rupture of the peasant-worker coalition.[22]

The Soviet Union and the KPD were not the only targets of Levi's critical pen; the shortcomings of the SPD received a full measure of censure. Levi disapproved of his party's failure to use its large parliamentary strength on behalf of the proletariat, to speak out strongly against the policies of bourgeois ministries, and to win the confidence of the proletariat. He regarded the SPD's entry into the *grosse Koalition* in 1923 as a subversion of social-democratic principles, as another, if not the most flagrant, example of the SPD's willingness to sacrifice socialist content for democratic form. The bourgeoisie, he asserted, had learned to make use of the Republic to further its own interests, whereas social-democracy had not yet realised that working-class solidarity was the initial step towards its success. Levi accused the SPD of being in part responsible for the 'stab in the back' suffered by the SPD-KPD coalition government of Saxony in 1923 and of having thus wrecked one of the few chances for solidarity.[23]

The plea for a united front of all proletarians or a variation of that theme runs through all of Levi's journalistic work. He called for an end to abuse and hostilities among the parties of the left, pleading with them to realise that their unity was a matter of life and death. The most important political task of the German working class in the next few years would be the protection of the Weimar Republic. This would mean cleansing the Republic of all those forces hostile to the working class—the judiciary which disregarded the laws of the land, the governments which turned the laws against the Republic, and officers who turned the sons of the people against the people. Levi warned the working class against alienating those sections of the middle classes which in the post-war turmoil had become disinherited and estranged from their class; they represented the potential footsoldiers of reaction.

* * * *

21 'Von den Konzessionen', *Unser Weg*, 15 July 1921, and 'Ihre Gefängnisse', ibid. 25 May 1922. Levi was incensed by Bukharin's attempt to obscure the concessions behind a theoretical smokescreen.

22 'Zur Entwicklung in Russland', *SPW*, 14 January 1926; 'Der Umsturz in Russland', ibid. 29 July 1926; 'Zurück vom Leninismus', ibid. 8 July 1927.

23 'Eine Frage an das Schicksal', ibid. 24 July 1923; 'Das Reich und die Arbeiter', ibid. 12 October 1923; 'Die Aufgaben des Parteitages', ibid. 11 June 1924; 'Der Dolchstoss gegen Sachsen', ibid. 2 November 1923.

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Throughout his life Levi was betrayed by his own nature. Circumstances elevated him to leadership but he lacked the singlemindedness of the true revolutionary who would compromise and suspend his critical judgment to attain his end. He had many of the qualities of a leader, but lacked staying power and would abandon the political arena in the midst of battle to pursue private interests.[24] But he was the most clearsighted among those who spoke out against the inconsistencies of the German left and predicted the Russification of the communist movement. He realised that the Comintern was incapable of becoming an independent organisation of the international left, for the Russian party was not in the position to submit its policies as a government to the criticism of parties that had not captured power. He foresaw that international communism would be subordinated to Soviet needs and interests and fought against a historic development that he was unprepared to accept.

After his explusion from the KPD he rarely came into the limelight, but in 1929 he assumed the role of public tribune in a sensational trial that was to become his swan song.[25] He was defending counsel for Joseph Bornstein, an editor of *Das Tage-Buch,* who was accused of defaming the character of the public prosecutor Jorns. Bornstein had endorsed the charge that in 1919 Jorns, in his capacity as judge-advocate, had abetted the murderers of Luxemburg and Liebknecht. Levi brought to light the details of those gruesome murders and called Jorns to account before the public for his complicity. In a summing-up which contemporary observers called Dantonesque, he unrolled the heroic period of German post-war socialism and proved Bornstein's innocence by establishing Jorns' guilt. The brilliance of his performance probably did not deceive the performer who, in conjuring up the past, must have envisaged also in his mind's eye all that might have been and never would be.

24 Levi's friends commented on his tendency to be distracted from his political responsibilities. Cf. Carl von Ossietzky, 'Paul Levi', *Die Weltbühne*, 18 February 1930. Levi is the revolutionary hero of a political novel who is compromised by his sensual life: Heinz Pol, *Entweder oder?* (Bremen, 1929).

25 See Levi, *Der Jorns-Prozess* (Berlin, 1929).

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THE MARXISM OF KARL KORSCH

Paul Mattick

THE new interest in Marxism, as reflected in numerous publications, seems to substantiate George Lichtheim's remark that 'a new doctrine becomes academically respectable only after it has petrified'.[1] From this point of view the renewed concern with Marx resembles an intellectual wake over the dead body of Marxism and the disposition of some of its still-usable properties among the heirs. If nothing good can be said about past Marxian practice, the aspects of Marxian theory, at least, can be and have been assimilated into current social sciences. Marx himself, it is said, is thereby honoured, for 'the highest triumph a great scholar can achieve is when his theories lose their special character and become an integral part of the scientific life of society'.[2]

The increasingly tolerant criticism of Marx reflects, on the one hand, the transformation of capitalism itself, and, on the other, the need to strengthen bourgeois ideology by adapting it to changed social conditions. But while the bourgeoisie, at least in part, appears ready to incorporate an emasculated Marxism into its own ideology, the official labour movement tries to free itself of the last remnants of its Marxian heritage. It does so, however, not as an independent labour movement in quest of a new and more effective theory and practice for achieving its own emancipation, but as an accredited social institution within existing society. It is thus clear that the renaissance of Marxism in the book-stalls and universities does not signify the return of a revolutionary consciousness, heralding new social struggles for the liberation of the working class, but rather its present ineffectiveness as an instrument of social change.

It would, of course, be a miracle if the theories evolved by Marx more than a hundred years ago still fitted the present situation. Marx believed not in miracles but in social change. He based his theories on the experiences of the past and on an analysis of existing conditions in order to discover the sources of social development in general and of capitalism in particular. His theories sprang from the recognition of an actually-existing social movement opposed to prevailing conditions, and they were expected to help this movement realise its own potentialities. These theories, and the social practice at their base, were themselves subject to change; Marxism, too, was but a historical phenomenon. His expectations have not come to pass. The Marxian doctrine prevails as a set of ideas unconnected with real social practice, or as the 'false consciousness' of state-prescribed ideologies in support of an un-Marxian practice.

1 G. Lichtheim, *Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study* (London, 1961), p. 394.
2 L. Kolakowski, *Der Mensch ohne Alternative* (Munich, 1961) p. 23.

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It is with these preliminaries in mind that the work of Karl Korsch is best approached. Korsch called himself a Marxist throughout his adult life, but he adhered to a Marxism without dogmas. His work displays a critical attitude towards Marx and the Marxists, even though it was intended to strengthen, not weaken, the Marxist movement. He understood this movement strictly as the proletarian class struggle for the abolition of capitalist society, and Marxian theory had meaning for him only as an indivisible and essential part of this social transformation.

LIKE Marx, Korsch came to the socialist movement by way of philosophy and through a strong sense for social justice which rebelled against the conditions of the labouring population. Born into a middle-class family in 1886, he had a sheltered youth and went on to study philosophy, law, economics, and sociology in Jena, Munich, Berlin, and Geneva; in 1911 he became a doctor of jurisprudence at the University of Jena. The same university gave him a professorship in 1919. As a student, Korsch was associated with the 'Free Student Movement', which opposed the traditional and generally reactionary fraternities, and attempted, albeit in a vague way, to establish links between the academic professions and the socialist movement. Between the years 1911 and 1914 Korsch lived in England, studying and practising English and International Law; while there he joined the Fabian Society.

As a philosopher Korsch was at first influenced by Kant; in a later period, mainly by Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx. Although he took his departure from the study of law, he shifted his emphasis, by way of philosophical studies, from the technicalities of law to their material foundations, to economics and politics. Most of his early writing, which he did in England, displays the influence of Fabianism and of the syndicalist and guild-socialist tendencies within the labour movement. His concern even then was with the practical activities of the movement rather than its theories. The latter, Korsch found, concentrated on the destruction of capitalism and showed little interest in the construction of the new society. Satisfied neither with the political-administrative reformism of the Fabian Society, nor with the purely economic proposals of syndicalism, Korsch favoured a direct and continuous implementation of socialist theory by practical activities which would actually make a difference in the social developmental process.

The year 1914 brought Korsch back to Germany and into the army where he remained throughout the war. The anti-war movement, which found its voice in 1915 in Zimmerwald and a year later in Kienthal, he welcomed with enthusiasm. After his demobilisation in 1919 he joined the USPD—the German Independent Socialist Party. Back at the University of Jena, he lectured on civil law and procedure, especially labour law and collective bargaining, as well as social science, contemporary history, and philosophy. His publications from 1919 onward show a preoccupation with the practical issues of socialism and with its character as a proletarian endeavour. 'All nationalisation', he wrote

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in 1919, ' which claims to represent the interests of the working population must, first of all, make a reality of participation of the workers in the organisation, administration, and determination of production and the social production process '.[3] Korsch was still speaking in terms of participation, not of control, because he did not think the working class was ready, nor the situation ripe, for the realisation of socialism in the full Marxian sense of a free and equal association of producers. He suggested a combination of workers' autonomy in industry with centralised planning via political institutions, a combination, in brief, of syndicalist and socialist ideas. It was by a system of workers' councils, operating on the factory level and in political life, that both self-determination and social regulation were to be realised.[4]

THE radical wing of the German socialist movement in the 1918 revolution and its aftermath demanded a total reconstruction of society on the basis of a system of workers' councils (on the pattern of the Russian Soviets), designed to bring all economic and political power into the hands of the working class. This radical group consisted mainly of the left-wing within the Independent Socialist Party, the *Spartakusbund*, which at the end of 1918 became the German Communist Party (KPD). At this time, however, and regardless of their differences, all socialist organisations advocated nationalisation. The differences between moderate and radical socialists seemed to be merely questions of procedure; whether to reach socialism by the methods of political democracy or by way of proletarian dictatorship.

The slogan, ' All power to the workers' councils ', implied the latter, for its realisation would leave other sections of the population without political representation. But to give them representation in a National Assembly implied the restoration of the power they had temporarily lost and the end of the nationalisation programme. The choice was avoided by deciding for both the workers' councils and the National Assembly—the councils in emasculated form as part of the Weimar Constitution.

With no prospects of early nationalisation, Korsch turned to an investigation of the reasons for the socialist failure. Obviously, the working class was not ready to utilise its opportunities, despite the long period of Marxist indoctrination; their Marxism, Korsch found, had degenerated into a mere system of knowledge and was no longer the consciousness of a revolutionary practice out to realise its revolutionary goal. It was then necessary to reconstruct the revolutionary, active side of Marxism, as exemplified in the Bolshevik Revolution. It was in this spirit that Korsch turned to a reinterpretation of Marxian theory in opposition to both the ' orthodox ' and the ' revisionist ' wings of the

[3] K. Korsch, ' Sozialisierung und Arbeiterbewegung ', in *Freies Deutschland*, Hannover, 1919.

[4] K. Korsch, *Was ist Sozialisierung?* Sozialistische Schriftenreeihe, Heft 1, Hannover, 1919.

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Marxism of the Second International.[5] It was in this spirit, too, that he entered the Communist Party with the majority of the Independent Socialists, even though he was not happy with the conditions of admission to the Communist International, which subordinated the national communist parties to the programme and tactics of the Moscow centre, controlled by the Russian Communist Party. Korsch shared the belief of the bolsheviks that the socialist workers were bound to gravitate towards the Moscow International. His command of Marxian theory led to his rapid elevation into the party's intellectual leadership. He became a communist representative in the Thuringian Diet and, in 1924, a member of the German Reichstag. He also became editor of, and frequent contributor to, the party's theoretical organ, *Die Internationale*.

The events of the 'crisis year' of 1923—the French occupation of the Ruhr, the runaway currency inflation, the series of large-scale strikes, the fiasco of the short lived communist attempt at insurrection in Hamburg, and the emergence of the Nazi movement—events in which both the Comintern and the KPD showed themselves indecisive and lacking in judgment, brought Korsch in opposition to the official, though changing, party line. He became the spokesman of its radical left-wing, *Entschiedene Linke*, and the editor of its oppositional organ, *Kommunistische Politik*. Although expelled from the KPD in 1926, Korsch remained a member of the Reichstag until 1928. From then on, he continued his political activity outside any definite organisational frame.

AMONG Korsch's early writings, *Marxism and Philosophy* is perhaps the most important, and this despite its apparently strictly theoretical nature. It was supplemented by various other essays on the materialist conception of history and the Marxian dialectic.[6] These works were not so much inquiries into the relationship between Marxism and philosophy as they were answers to the question of what Marxism itself represented. In this way, the theoretical became at once a practical concern.

According to Hegel, a philosophy cannot be anything but 'its time expressed in ideas.' Korsch conceived both bourgeois philosophy and Marxism as expressions of one and the same historical development, which created in the proletariat the necessary counterpart to the bourgeoisie. The ideational relationship between bourgeois philosophy and Marxism was one aspect of the real and contradictory differences between labour and capital. Marxism was conditioned upon the existence of capitalism and was independent only as the point of view of the proletarian class in its struggle against bourgeois society. It

[5] K. Korsch, *Quintessence des Marxismus* (Berlin–Leipzig, 1922); *Kernpunkte der Materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung* (Berlin, 1922); *Marxismus und Philosophie*, Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung (Leipzig, 1923), etc.

[6] Collected in the second, enlarged edition of *Marxismus und Philosophie* (Leipzig, 1930).

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could arise only in conjunction with an actual social movement transcending the historical limitations of capitalism. Bourgeois science and philosophy could not develop beyond the material conditions of their own existence. Where the capitalist mode of production arrested further social development, it also arrested the development of science and philosophy. It was the working class which would break the general social deadlock through its own emancipation, removing the class limitations of social, scientific, and philosophical development. That did not mean that Marxism, as the theory and practice of the proletarian class, developed its own science and philosophy; it meant that the actual abolition of the capitalist mode of production would also end the science and philosophy peculiar to it.

Korsch was aware, of course, that Marxism refers to itself as scientific socialism and not as a philosophy, and that both Marx and Engels equated bourgeois philosophy with philosophy as such. Just as Marx denounced not only one particular historical form of the state—the bourgeois state—but the state as such, so he fought not only against particular philosophical systems but for the elimination of philosophy. How was this to be accomplished? Obviously not by a single mental act. Just as the abolition of the state would require a whole historical process, so the defeat of philosophy would demand a prolonged ideological struggle. The question of the relationship between Marxism and philosophy would persist for as long as those conditions prevailed which had given rise to bourgeois philosophy and to its Marxian counterpart, scientific socialism.[7]

Korsch's concern with the relation between Marxism and philosophy did not imply a particular interest in philosophy on his own part, nor an attempt to revive the criticism of philosophy—which had been the young Marx's starting-point in his criticism of capitalism; it derived from his desire to restore Marxism's revolutionary content. The revolutionary character of Marxism had been lost and could be regained only through the resumption of an actual struggle against capitalist society. This struggle seemed at hand in the revolutionary events released by the first World War. In these upheavals the Marxism of the Second International came into conflict with the Marxism of the Third International. How and why did this happen? Wherein did these two movements actually differ? The question had to be answered by applying the materialist conception of history to the history of the Marxist labour movement itself.

IN so doing, Korsch divided Marxian history into three distinct periods. The first begins with Marx's philosophical communism and ends with the *Communist Manifesto*. It was still largely dominated by philosophy as a comprehensive criticism of existing conditions, which includes, but does not separate and isolate, the economic, political, and ideological elements constituting the totality of social life and development. This

[7] Ibid. p. 89.

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period came to an end with the defeat of the revolutionary movements of 1848. After that a long, non-revolutionary period ensued which altered the character of Marxism. And this could not be otherwise, for Marxism itself insists upon the interdependence of theory and practice. The new revolutionary upheavals initiated by the Russian Revolution promised a third and revolutionary period of Marxism.

During the long period of inaction, Korsch argued, Marx and Engels developed their theories by giving them an increasingly scientific content. This, however, did not dissolve their system into a number of special and generally applicable social sciences; it retained its identity as an all-embracing critical theory of the whole of capitalist theory and practice, which also could be overcome only in its entirety, through the overthrow of the social relations on which it was based. While philosophy was thus replaced by science, science did not become the key to the social transformation process. Marxism was still conceived as the revolutionary consciousness of an actually-occurring revolutionary process terminating in the abolition of capitalism. While this revolutionary consciousness had evolved out of philosophy, it increased its effectiveness by way of science; but it was neither science nor philosophy in the restricted sense of these terms.

The return of revolutionary conditions, in Korsch's view, would also mark the return to a revolutionary social consciousness. The revolutionary process was at once ideational and actual. But as history has to be made by men, this implied that the revolutionary consciousness had to be fostered as much as the actual transformation of its socio-economic base. It was not possible to neglect one in favour of the other without jeopardising both. By attacking once again on all fronts of social awareness and social practice, there would be restored the radical activity of Marxism's revolutionary past which had been lost during its evolutionary period—a loss which manifested itself in the reactionary character of the Marxism of the Second International.

Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy* embodying these ideas, appeared in 1923 in Germany and a year later in Russia. Although written for the communist and against the social-democratic theory and practice, both rejected it as a deviation from true Marxism. For Kautsky it was as false as the whole of communism. For the bolsheviks, it was an idealist revision of Leninist Marxism. Rejection by both the main Marxist tendencies pointed to their common commitment to the Marxism of the Second International, despite their otherwise divergent political practices. Korsch answered their criticism in the second edition (1930), but by this time he had overcome all his illusions with respect to the revolutionary potentialities of the Third International.

Korsch now recognised a definite affinity between the Leninist version of Marxism and the Marxism of the Second International. Although the latter had been split on theoretical lines into a so-called 'revisionist' wing and an 'orthodox' wing, this did not affect actual policies; both wings were revisionist. Their Marxism was mere ideology, that is, the

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'false consciousness' of a reformist practice. This, Korsch conceded, may have been unavoidable, but there was no need to contend, as both Kautsky and Lenin did, that the working class by itself was not able to develop a socialist consciousness, that this had to be brought to it from the outside, by the socialist-oriented, educated bourgeoisie. Socialist consciousness, in these conditions, was not the revolutionary activity of the working class, but the result of the intelligentsia's scientific insight into social mechanisms and their laws of development.

With this, socialist consciousness ceased to be what it had been for Marx, namely, the theoretical expression of the proletarian class struggle. If Kautsky's 'orthodoxy' represented the false consciousness of a revisionist practice, Lenin's revolutionary Marxism was no better, existing only in ideological form as the false consciousness of a non-socialist activity. It did not express the practical necessities of the modern, international, anti-capitalist class struggle, but was determined by specific Russian conditions, which required not so much the emancipation as the creation of an industrial proletariat.

THIS situation could be altered only by revolutionary working-class action on an international scale—wherever there was an objective possibility of transforming capitalist into socialist society. Without such actions, the bolsheviks were condemned to bring into being a new social form of oppression, which was bound, in its own self-defence, to subordinate the revolutionary aspirations of the international working class to its own narrow ends. So long as there was a possibility of the Russian Revolution being extended westward, the Leninist attempt to drive it beyond its objective limitations conformed to the requirements of a Western proletarian revolution. With the West's failure this was no longer true. Korsch therefore argued that it was necessary to dissociate proletarian communism from bolshevism and the Third International, as, previously, it had been necessary to break away from the reformism of the Second International. Both movements had to be opposed, equally with capitalism in all its manifestations; the international radical labour movement should not be exploited for the specific purposes of the bolshevik regime and the national interests of Russia.

Korsch parted with the Communist International less because he had, since 1923, found its theory wanting and a mere repetition of Kautsky's orthodoxy, than because the communist movement had become an objectively counter-revolutionary force. It was not that its policies were the outcome of false theories but that they were determined by the concrete needs of the Russian state, and by the special interests of its new ruling elite and their bureaucratic retinue. By trying to use international communism for Russia's national needs, the bolsheviks were repeating the miserable performance of the Second International which, in 1914, also sacrificed internationalism to nationalism.[8] The new

[8] K. Korsch, *Der Weg der Komintern* (Berlin, 1926).

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counter-revolutionary role of bolshevism was apparent not only in Russia's internal and foreign policies but in the everyday policies of all the national communist parties as well.

First in his own paper, *Kommunistische Politik,* later in Franz Pfempfert's anti-bolshevik and anti-social-democratic *Aktion,* in Franz Jung's *Der Gegner,* in various liberal publications and academic journals, Korsch continued his criticism of the labour movement, whether openly reformist or seemingly radical, always combining his critique with an elucidation and critical interpretation of Marxian doctrine. The themes of his articles ranged from questions of Hegel's dialectic, over various aspects of Marxian theory, to contemporary political and economic issues, and established his pre-eminence as a Marxist polemicist, even though he found a diminishing circle of appreciative readers and a growing number of political enemies.

Particularly outstanding was his polemic [9] against Kautsky's *magnum opus, The Materialistic Conception of History,* which appeared in 1927. In it Kautsky himself repudiated his past 'orthodoxy' in the interest of 'scientific progress'. In the attempt to develop Marx's historical materialism through its extension by way of the natural sciences, Kautsky took as his starting-point not the dialectic of society as derived from Hegel, but the evolutionary biological theories of Darwin. Kautsky's work confirmed Korsch's earlier critique of the 'scientific socialism' of the Second International, as well as his assertion that its orthodoxy merely hid its own revisionist inclinations which were now, finally, proclaimed as an advance over Marx.

In 1932, Korsch prepared a new edition of the first volume of Marx's *Capital,*[10] again stating in his preface and commentary that, contrary to the assumptions of many Marxists, Marx himself did not differentiate between the specifically historical and the strictly theoretical-economic content of his work. In the generally accepted view of Rudolf Hilferding, for instance, Marxism was a scientific system of the general laws of social production and Marxian economic theory an application of the general law to the commodity-producing society. Marx's labour theory of value and the materialist conception of history were seen as identical, whereas for Marx the first referred only to capitalism and the second was not a general economic law but elucidated historical development as a whole. In being an effective critique of bourgeois political economy, Marx's *Capital* was, of course, as Korsch pointed out, also a contribution to economic science. But political economy was for Marx not only a theoretical system of propositions, either true or false, but a piece of historical reality, i.e., the totality and the history of bourgeois society, and as such it constituted the subject-matter of *Capital.*

[9] K. Korsch, *Die Materialistische Geschichtsauffassung: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Karl Kautsky* (Leipzig, 1929).

[10] *Das Kapital. Mit Vorrede und Anmerkungen von Karl Korsch* (Berlin, 1932).

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WHEN Hitler came to power in 1933, Korsch left Germany for England, went from there to Denmark, and in 1936 emigrated to the United States. During his stay in Denmark he spent much time with Bertold Brecht,[11] who had previously attended his lectures in Berlin, and began work on his book *Karl Marx* for Professor Morris Ginsberg's series of sociological studies.[12]

Korsch's *Karl Marx* is perhaps the richest and at the same time the most concentrated interpretation of Marxism. It is at once historical, sociological, and economic. Despite the auspices under which it was published, it denies any connection between Marxism and what is generally thought of as sociology. Its concern is with the original ideas of Marx rather than with their subsequent development, and these ideas are viewed in the light of recent historical events.

Korsch's exposition is organised around three principles: historical specification, change, and criticism. Marx was strictly concerned, he wrote, with capitalist society and its fetishistic economic categories; his sole interest was to change society; the particulars of this change were left to the future. This did not exclude theoretical generalisation; but by analysing the specific historical form of bourgeois society Marx attained a general knowledge of social development far transcending that particular form, and by penetrating the fetishistic categories of political economy, his critique became the theory of an impending revolution. Marx's theory of the class struggle was itself class struggle and did not pretend or desire to be anything else.

Marxism, in Korsch's view, was the transitional theory of capitalist society as a transitory phase of historical development. It dealt 'with all ideas as being connected with a definite historical epoch and the specific form of society pertaining to that epoch, and recognises itself as being just as much an historical product as any other theory pertaining to a definite stage of social development and to a definite social class' (p. 84). This historical character of Marxism excluded any form of dogmatism, and Korsch devoted a great part of his subsequent work to freeing Marxism from such encumbrances.

Korsch's book found only a limited response, and his political ideas even less, in a social climate shaped by preparations for war and by the defeat, either actual or by default, of all working-class aspirations. The Spanish Civil War and its partial transformation into an imperialist contest found Korsch siding with the anarcho-syndicalists and their short-lived attempts to collectivise social production and distribution. All manifestations of proletarian independence through direct action for

11 Brecht referred to Korsch and to Fritz Sternberg as his Marxist teachers. But their teaching was obviously lost on the pupil, who remained a Stalinist with bourgeois inclinations until his death. However, there were some results of the Korsch-Brecht 'collaboration', for instance, Brecht's attempt (in rather questionable taste) to modernise and re-write the *Communist Manifesto* in hexametric form. See: W. Rash, 'Bertold Brecht's Marxistischer Lehrer', *Merkur*, October 1963; *Sinn und Form*, No. 2/3, 1963.

12 Published in London in 1938 and re-issued in New York, 1963. A German version is soon to appear under the auspices of the Institute for Social History, Amsterdam.

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working-class objectives Korsch now perceived as so many signs pointing to the persistence of proletarian class consciousness within the expanding area of authoritarian control over ever larger spheres of social life. Not ideological adherence to Marxist doctrine, but action by the working class on its own behalf was the key to a possible rebirth of the proletarian movement.

STANDING outside the official labour movement, and quite unfit for the increasingly conformist academic world, Korsch's life in America was one of great isolation, which became more pronounced during the war and its aftermath. For most of the time he had no other outlet than the publications of the 'Council Communists',[13] themselves a small and isolated group with a consistently radical Marxist point of view, whose anti-parliamentary and anti-trade unionist views Korsch now shared. His contributions dealt with the monopolistic transformation of capitalism, with the false and real issues of the second world war, and with the workers' attitude to the war; in Korsch's view the war could not further their real interests whatever its outcome. 'The workers', he wrote, 'have already too long done other people's tasks, imposed on them under the high-sounding names of humanity, of human progress, of justice, and freedom, and what not. . . . The only task for the workers, as for every other class, is to look out for themselves'.[14]

In 1950 Korsch visited Europe and delivered a series of lectures in Germany and Switzerland, in which he propounded ten theses on the state of Marxism.[15] At first sight, these seemed to indicate Korsch's total break with Marxism. It no longer made sense, he stated, even to raise the question whether or not Marx's and Engels's teachings still had theoretical validity and practical applicability. Marx's theory in its original function, as the theory of the workers' socialist revolution, could not be restored and all attempts to do so were reactionary utopias. To make a first step towards the reconstruction of revolutionary theory and practice, it was necessary to deny Marxism's monopolistic claims upon the revolutionary movement, and to consider Marx merely as one of many founders and developers of socialism, along with the so-called utopian socialists, and with Marx's great competitors, Blanqui, Proudhon and Bakunin. Important parts of Marx's theory remained valid, but their functions had changed with changing conditions. Particularly critical for Marxism was its dependence on the backward economic and political circumstances in which it arose, and its consequent connection with the political forms of the bourgeois revolution. Equally

[13] *Living Marxism* and, later, *New Essays*, both published in Chicago from 1934 to 1943. A selection of Korsch's articles from these periodicals will be published by the Amsterdam Institute for Social History, and another selection by Feltrinelli, Milan. See also K. Korsch, 'The New Program of the American Workers Party', *Council Correspondence* (Chicago), January 1935.

[14] *Living Marxism*, Vol. V, No. 3, p. 47.

[15] Published in 1959 in *Arguments* (Paris), No. 16.

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critical was the belief that England constituted the model for all subsequent capitalist development, and that it was this particular type of development that provided the necessary presupposition for socialism. These conditions and assumptions gave rise to the Marxist overestimation of the state as the decisive instrument of the socialist revolution, as well as to the mystical identification of capitalist development with the proletarian revolution.

Because of these characteristics, it was possible for Lenin to adapt and transfer Marxism, in a new form, to Russia and Asia, and to change Marxian socialism from a revolutionary theory to pure ideology, which could be used for a variety of different goals, and was so used in the Russian Revolution and in the world at large. But the mere transformation of competitive private capitalism into a monopoly over the means of production and social control did not lead to the self-determination of the workers, and was not, whatever else it might be, any longer a revolutionary goal.

WHAT was new in these theses was only their tone. Otherwise they were merely a summing-up of Korsch's life-long critical preoccupation with Marxism in its relation to the workers' revolution, and a consequence of his conviction that Marxism itself could not comprehend more than a particular stage of historical development. As once he had worked his way from Marx's theories to the Russian Revolution, so now he worked his way back from Leninism to Marxism, and found the former already contained in the latter. This discovery, however, required the intermediary actual application of Marxism to social reality. The bourgeois degeneration of Marxism in Russia, as Korsch had pointed out in 1938, 'was not essentially different from the outcome of the series of ideological transformations which . . . befell the various currents of so-called Western Marxism. Less than at any previous time does Marxism today serve as a theoretical weapon in an independent struggle of the proletariat, for the proletariat and by the proletariat'.[16] But now he found the seeds of all these transformations already embedded in the time-conditioned Marxism of Marx himself.

What in Marxian theory and practice appeared as anti-bourgeois at one stage of capitalist development became assimilable to the capitalist mode of production at another stage. What seemed to be the road to socialism led to a new type of capitalism. Thus Korsch's criticism of Marxian orthodoxy, particularly of its Leninist version, finally became a critique of Marxism itself and therewith, of course, self-criticism. However, it was not, he said, 'directed against what may be called in a very comprehensive sense the Marxist, that is, the independent revolutionary movement of the international working class'. It was

[16] K. Korsch, 'The Marxist Ideology in Russia', *Living Marxism*, Vol IV, No. 2, p. 50; 'Marx's Stellung in der Europaeischen Revolution von 1848', *Die Schule*, No. 5, 1948.

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directed against the insufficiency of Marxism, in all its various stages, to serve this revolutionary movement in an unambiguous way.[17]

* * * *

A great number of fragmentary drafts for articles, as well as outlines for contemplated books, attest to Korsch's continued desire to proceed from the criticism of Marxism to an understanding of the theoretical and practical requirements of socialism under the prevailing conditions and their ascertainable tendencies. For he was still convinced that, like the capitalism of old, capitalism in its modern monopolistic form also has its historical limitations. If this was no longer possible within the old Marxist frame of reference, the new revolutionary theory and practice would nevertheless be a kind of Marxism of the twentieth century, though it could not be called by that name. To serve that end, Korsch not only tried to look forward, but also re-examined those theories and movements of the past which had opposed Marxism not because it was socialist, but because it appeared not socialistic enough, by incorporating into itself aspects of a capitalist nature and of capitalist development—such as government centralisation of decision-making—which would hamper the self-determination of the working class.

Korsch also realised that the so-called under-developed countries would, in one form or another, employ Marxian ideology for immediate ends that did not correspond with the concept of socialism as the emancipation of the industrial proletariat and the abolition of social class relations. But these transformations were real and had to be related to the general process of social change now under way on a world-wide scale. To describe this process in Marxian terms was to misunderstand it; nor was it possible to ignore this actual transformation process by adhering to a Marxism which did not fit the real situation.

It is not clear whether the fragmentary state of Korsch's various endeavours to deal with the present world situation and its revolutionary, or counter-revolutionary, potentialities was due to difficulties inherent in the subject matter itself, or was related to the progressive loss of his own abilities—the result of an illness which was slowly destroying him. His last coherent attempt to formulate his new ideas has the significant title, *The Time of Abolitions*. This investigates the possibilities and requirements of the expected abolition of the capitalist mode of production, of capital, of labour itself, and of the state. It tries to segregate the realistic from the utopian elements in Marx's thinking on these questions, and to go one step beyond Marx in considering the probabilities of a socialist future.

Korsch died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1961.

[17] K. Korsch, ' Marxism and the Present Task of the Proletarian Class Struggle ', *Living Marxism*, Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 119.

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IN MEMORIAM— ALFRED ROSMER

Gustave Stern

ON 6 May 1964, in a hospital near Paris, Alfred Rosmer died at the age of eighty-seven. If the almost thousand delegates attending the congress of the French Communist Party, which was held that same month in Paris, had been asked 'Who is Rosmer?', perhaps a few of the party leaders who had lived through the first world war and the turbulent post-war years would have known the answer; the majority of the delegates would probably have shrugged their shoulders and asked, 'Well, who is Rosmer?'

When Albert Camus, the writer who died in such tragic circumstances, wrote the preface to Rosmer's book *Moscou sous Lénine* in 1953, he remarked in the very first sentence, 'It is a paradox of this forgetful age that I should have to introduce Alfred Rosmer . . .'

I am, therefore, going to try to sketch a profile of Alfred Rosmer, the man who was buried in the presence of about 300 people in the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, and whose death was scarcely noticed by the 'official' French working-class movement. Rosmer's real name was Alfred Griot. He borrowed his pseudonym from the hero of one of Ibsen's dramas. He was born in Patterson, New Jersey, in August 1877. His parents, workers from the Saint-Etienne district, went into exile after the fall of the Paris Commune and did not return to France until 1880, when they settled in Paris. Rosmer, therefore, grew up in an environment familiar with the social struggles of the time and with the early working-class movement.

In his youth, when he was employed as a local government official, Rosmer came into contact with revolutionary socialist student groups as well as with revolutionary anarchist circles, which at that time in France, as in Spain, were involved in passionate discussions about politics and the meaning of life in general. For him it was a period of self-education and development; it was the thirst for knowledge which struck those who met Rosmer at that time as the most remarkable characteristic of a young man primarily intent on widening his horizons and finding closer contact with the aspiring working-class movement.

That Rosmer was accepted in revolutionary syndicalist circles at the beginning of the century is in a way typical of his development. Revolutionary syndicalism in France (if to a lesser degree than in Spain) was not the sectarian expression of a group of unrealistic people, but a genuine movement of important sections of the working classes who had already been represented in the Paris Commune. The traditions of these 'compagnons' have survived in the free trade union movement of present-day France. Individualist anarchists or revolutionary syndicalists, they are intent on a radical change in the social order, regard the

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State in any form as the principal evil, and envisage a society of free producers.

Rosmer was a member of these circles in his youth and he remained essentially faithful throughout his life to those ideas which were planted in his early years, even if, as we shall see, the Soviet October Revolution of 1917 marked a decisive turning point for him.

At the beginning of the century revolutionary syndicalism was represented by men who, like Rosmer, are no longer remembered in France today—men like Pierre Monatte, who died four years before Rosmer, Fernand Pelloutier, Alfred Merrheim, Marcel Martinet, and others. Pierre Monatte, with whom Alfred Rosmer was closely associated for the whole of his life, had gradually turned from anarchism to revolutionary syndicalism as a result of his trade union experiences. Rosmer appeared to have little regard for Sorel's ideas; the myth of violence seemed to contradict his ethical beliefs. He was, on the other hand, committed to the concept of 'direct action' in its widest sense, and in the particular sense as applied to the trade union movement, the aim of which was not only the immediate improvement of social conditions but the transformation of the social foundations of society.

Thus he was drawn to the group around the *Vie Ouvrière*, a paper which, within the framework of the general trade union association, the CGT, was advocating these very ideas. They were a very strong minority intent on finding spiritual contact with the aspiring socialist movement—a minority, however, with an important intellectual and organising influence.

Rosmer was active in the *Vie Ouvrière* group until the beginning of the first world war, at first as drama critic and commentator on parliamentary affairs. It was as if he wanted to show at the very outset of his work in the group that there was no aspect of life in which he was not interested, whether artistic or political.

THE intellectual attitudes of this group which Rosmer joined can be defined by a term which has become completely unfamiliar throughout the contemporary working-class movement (this is understandable for political and sociological reasons)—the attitude expressed in the French idiom '*Refus de parvenir*', the refusal to 'get on', to aspire to a career. A friend of Rosmer's, the syndicalist Jacquet, published a novel after the second world war entitled *Refus de parvenir*. In a preface to this novel the famous French historian Marc Bloch, who read the manuscript before he was shot by the Nazis, expressed his admiration for this idea of '*Refus de parvenir*', and noted at the same time that Jacquet, a village schoolteacher who wanted to devote himself to the education of children, was one of the last representatives of this 'noble breed of men'. He might have added that Alfred Rosmer was another.

For Rosmer, quite against his will, became at a certain point in his life one of the leaders of the revolutionary working-class movement in France. Unknown outside the *Vie Ouvrière* group, he immediately earned

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the confidence of his friends and of all who had the opportunity to work with him or merely talk to him. He had the gift, retained throughout his life, of formulating his opinion of things and events simply and clearly, and he quickly showed that he had the courage, once he had accepted an idea, to defend it against whatever odds.

The great test was soon to come for him and others. It was the outbreak of the first world war, a time when everyone was being weighed in the balance and many were found wanting. The men who led the socialist and trade union movements in France when war was imminent had without exception adopted a clear, consistent position which was defined and confirmed in numerous national and international conferences: should war break out, it would not be 'the war of the working class'; on the contrary, it would be the duty of the working classes in these circumstances to fight against this war on a national and international scale, relying primarily on the general strike.

It is irrelevant in the present context to debate or attack this idea, or to demonstrate that a general strike was historically impossible. The point is rather to show how, at this time, most of the leading personalities of the working-class movement trimmed their sails to the wind from one day to the next, and how they succumbed to the general psychosis which was affecting almost everyone.

Among the exceptions in France were Alfred Rosmer, his friend Pierre Monatte, Alfred Merrheim (one of the most intelligent men in the trade union movement), and others who were no less brave and whose names have remained unknown in history. In a monumental work entitled *Le Mouvement ouvrier pendant la guerre—de l'Union sacrée à Zimmerwald,* the first volume of which was published in 1936, Alfred Rosmer, in over 500 pages of documents accompanied by brief but always clear and illuminating commentaries, traced the history of the working-class movement during the first world war. No serious student of this period can overlook this work, in which a man whose deep convictions did not impair the objectivity of his approach shows how people, how an entire movement give up or retain their convictions under pressure, how the wave of nationalism and chauvinism, from one day to the next, swept away the work of decades, and how, on the other hand, a few managed to resist the wave despite tremendous pressure from the authorities and from their own circle, and summoned the courage to stand by their convictions.

Rosmer belonged to the latter group. In the said book he describes 30 July 1914 when 'panic seized Paris' and the screaming mobs shouted '*à Berlin, à Berlin*'. Rosmer writes: 'In this Paris Monatte and I made up our minds to look for all possible islands of resistance . . . there was no question of continuing with the publication of *Vie Ouvrière;* mobilisation had deprived it of its essential support, viz. its subscribers'. Rosmer then describes in moving fashion how he and Pierre Monatte visited several friends and how disappointed they were: nationalism had affected even the best men. There were a few exceptions, among them

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Marcel Martinet. 'It was the first time', writes Rosmer, 'that we felt firm ground beneath our feet, and this gave us a feeling of great joy'.

THIS is not the place to recount in detail the history of the French working-class movement during the first world war. Rosmer's activities at this time consisted in getting together people who thought as he did, who were willing to 'make war on war', though they would be voices calling in the wilderness. At first sight what he did during the war might strike the superficially-minded as modest, but in historical perspective his work proved fruitful, both from the political and the humane point of view. Rosmer writes: 'Monatte was already in contact with Martov. . . . The *Journal de Genève* published the article by Romain Rolland "*Au-dessus de la mêlée*"; copies were typed and even handwritten, to get it distributed and make it generally known.'

This was Rosmer's life and that of his friends at that time. They sent out 'material' to their friends. They searched everywhere for those 'islands of resistance' which might give them new hope of saving what there was to be saved from the misfortune of the war, viz., the survival of the working-class movement and the guarantee of its future.

A quotation from the work of the French writer Raymond Lefebvre, *L'Eponge de Vinaigre*, will illustrate the atmosphere reigning in Paris during the first year of the war in these circles. 'Near the corner of the street Grange aux Belles and the Quai de Jemappes a small, dark shop was opened in 1914, the "Librairie du Travail". There lived Pierre Monatte, the editor-in-chief of *Vie Ouvrière*, who shared with Merrheim the glory of raising the first protest of the French workers against the war. This shop was closed down on 2 August. And yet the police noticed that a tiny light flickered there on certain autumn evenings and that the conspirators slipped in one after another and that the meetings broke up at 11 p.m. I took part in these discussions more than once. They did little more than mournfully ponder the cold remains of the International, and take bitter note of the vast numbers who had capitulated. . . . We were possessed by a black pride, pride in the constancy of our beliefs, pride in our resistance to the flood of stupidity. . . . Rosmer, the poet Martinet, Trotsky, Guilbeaux, Merrheim, and two or three others whose names I do not know, we were (in the centre of Paris) as much the last citizens of a splendid, intelligent Europe which the world had lost for ever as the first representatives of a future International in which we firmly believed. . . .'

Rosmer was one of these few. In his book he describes with the modesty which was one of his most outstanding qualities how he helped to bring about the famous conferences of Zimmerwald and Kienthal, those meetings which during the war seemed modest manifestations of resistance but which, in historical perspective, were to make a decisive contribution to the future development of the working-class movement.

While Rosmer was writing *Letters to the Subscribers of 'Vie Ouvrière'*, working as editor of *Union des Métaux*, the metal-workers'

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newspaper, sending out documents and keeping in touch with the like-minded, he made friendships which were to endure for the rest of his life. If among these friends Leo Trotsky is mentioned first, that is because this friendship was to prove decisive for his future. The Russian revolutionary, who, with Antonov-Ovseyenko, was publishing *Nashe Slovo* (*Our Word*) in Paris, made a tremendous impression on Alfred Rosmer, and their friendship continued until Trotsky's death. Despite their many differences of opinion, which did not for the most part concern matters of political principle, what was lasting is revealed in Alfred Rosmer's words: 'We, who were familiar with the work of *Nashe Slovo* and who knew what the Russian group had done in Paris, wish to express our gratitude to the *Nashe Slovo* group for the help which it afforded the French working-class movement during the war. And we also wish to state that rarely in its history has the working-class movement seen such courage, intelligence and devotion'.

During the war, Rosmer and his friends (like Karl Liebknecht in Germany) cherished the idea of 'proletarian internationalism'. Whatever view historians today may take of this concept, it was his stand on this position which in itself places Rosmer among the exceptional figures in the working-class movement when one considers what courage, what intellectual and moral strength were needed to defend amidst raging nationalism and chauvinism a supranational vision, the concept of an International which seemed to be buried for ever.

WE have now come to the point where Rosmer after the trial of the war assumed a leading role in the newly-established Communist Party. The man of whom the well-known French socialist Amedée Dunois wrote in 1921: 'Previously an individualist in Ibsen's sense of the term, he came at last, from contact with the life of the masses and with the warmth of the working-class movement, to an understanding of himself and of others, and placed himself at the service of the working class'; in the stormy years following the Russian Revolution he joined the communist movement.

It is a perfectly reasonable question to ask why men like Pierre Monatte and Alfred Rosmer, who had achieved greatness in the school of revolutionary syndicalism, men of a pronounced individualism tinged with anarchism, decided to join a movement which was determined to organise the 'Jacobins' of the working classes on Lenin's platform, an aim which was hardly in keeping with the ideas of free self-determination that were prevalent in revolutionary syndicalist circles.

A hasty assessment of the step which Rosmer and his friends took at the beginning of the twenties would fail to take into account the general atmosphere reigning at that time amongst those who had assumed a 'defeatist' attitude during the war, and who were bound to see in Lenin, Trotsky, and their friends the men who, on the basis of the October Revolution, had wished to continue the work begun during the war. It was not only the French revolutionary syndicalists who were

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represented at the first meetings of the Communist International, but also the revolutionary syndicalists of Spain, Italy and the USA. The work which had been started in Moscow seemed to all of them the natural continuation of the 'International' which had already been virtually founded at Zimmerwald and Kienthal.

But let Alfred Rosmer speak for himself in the words of the introduction to *Moscou sous Lénine*, published in 1953: 'I was in Soviet Russia several times between 1920 and 1924. The longest I stayed was 17 months, from June 1920 to October 1921. I returned to Moscow in February 1922, and went back every year, sometimes several times in the same year. I attended the second congress of the Communist International, and the third and fourth. I was a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International from June 1920 to June 1921, and of its "little bureau" from the time of the Tours Congress in December 1920, when the French Socialist Party voted for affiliation to the Communist International. I worked with Lozovsky in founding the Red Trade Union International, and I was a member of the delegation of the Communist International at the Conference of the Three Internationals in Berlin in 1922, as well as that which met in Hamburg for the amalgamation of the Second International and the International Union of Socialist Parties. I was a member of the central committee of the French Communist Party, of the Politburo, and of the administrative board of *Humanité* from 1923 to March 1924'.

Rosmer, Monatte, and their friends remained members of the Communist Party until 1924. When this group of revolutionary syndicalists decided to join the Communist Party their intention was no doubt to make of this movement, born of the decline of the old working-class movement and the Russian Revolution, an organisation worthy of the best traditions of revolutionary syndicalism. This plan failed in France, as it did in other countries where socialists and syndicalists tried to co-operate with the 'Jacobins' of Bolshevism.

The gradual 'bolshevisation' of the communist parties, which found its first documentary expression in the famous '21 conditions' of admission to the Communist International, was fated in the long run to lead to bitter altercations between the 'Jacobins' and those elements which were committed to the concept of socialism in freedom. For the French syndicalist circles around Alfred Rosmer, they came to a head in 1924. The 'synthesis between syndicalists and communists' which Rosmer believed necessary proved impossible; the struggle to achieve it continued until November 1924. It was then that Rosmer and his friends decided to leave the communist party, after—as Rosmer wrote in 1924 from Moscow—they had fought for years against 'unrelenting and double-dealing bureaucratic methods'. A great experiment had come to an end, and the Stalinist era was heralded by the fact that those who announced their resignations were subsequently expelled, because nobody could 'leave' the communist party—they could only be thrown out of it.

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Within the French Communist Party Alfred Rosmer had undisputed authority. In *L'Oeil de Moscou,* published in 1964, Jules Humbert-Droz, Comintern representative in France in the twenties, reproduces a letter he wrote to Zinoviev, dated 10 September 1923, in which he says: 'Rosmer seems to me the only person with the necessary authority and the indispensable intuition to be the general secretary of the party. Certainly he cannot work for *Humanité* at the same time, but Monatte could be more active in the party. He ought to go to Moscow for a while to become more fully informed'.

That Rosmer and his friends broke with the communist party was primarily a manifestation of a socialist humanism which proved incompatible with the basic tenets of bolshevism. It was also an expression of their uneasiness at the developments which were taking place in the Soviet Union at that time. People who adhered to the ethics of '*refus de parvenir*' were bound to feel troubled by the increasing bureaucracy and by the 'impoverishment of communist ideas' of which Rosmer reported in letters from Moscow in 1924. It is interesting to note that the campaign against Trotsky, which began before Lenin's death, was one of the most decisive reasons why Rosmer and Monatte left the Communist International. The long-standing friendship between Rosmer and Trotsky, begun in the first world war, was to a large extent to determine Rosmer's political path.

AFTER the break with the communist party, the periodical *Revolution Prolétarienne* was founded on Rosmer's and Monatte's initiative. This journal, which still exists, took up the old revolutionary syndicalist ideas again. For years Alfred Rosmer contributed simple but convincing articles on international events, particularly on those which concerned developments in the Soviet Union, and on 'Stalinism'. But just as important, if not more vital for him, was his connexion with Trotsky, of whom he wrote to Monatte in June 1924 that 'he remains the only source of strength from which I can derive new energy'.

Thereafter Rosmer remained steadfastly loyal to the Russian revolutionary. He took part in the political life of the 'Left Opposition' which was started by Trotsky, and he wrote for the paper published by Trotsky's supporters in France. Rosmer and his wife, Margueritte, paid many visits to Trotsky in exile—to Istanbul and Mexico. Margueritte, who died two years before her husband, was the constant and devoted supporter of his revolutionary activities. Rosmer was in Mexico in May 1940 when the attempt was made on Trotsky's life.

Rosmer did not by any means share all the views held by Trotsky's followers. Their dogmatic sectarian beliefs in particular induced him to hold himself slightly aloof from Trotskyite organisations, but this did not cloud his personal relationship with Trotsky, with whose basic views he knew he was at one. Although he did not himself take part in the debates, it was at his home that the meeting took place at which the Fourth International was founded. He took great pleasure in

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working meticulously on the republication of some of Trotsky's works, and found time in the last years of his life to publish the second volume of the *Mouvement ouvrier pendant la guerre* (although all his documents were lost during the second world war); he was preparing the third volume of this work when death overtook him.

In the preface which Albert Camus wrote to Rosmer's *Moscou sous Lénine* there is one sentence which calls for comment: 'The man [Rosmer], who wholeheartedly took part in the great experiment of which he talks in this book, and whose perversion he came to recognise, never saw in its failure a pretext for condemnation of the work itself'. In this sentence Camus expresses an unquestionable truth. After his break with the Communist International Rosmer did not miss an opportunity to take a stand against that 'perversion'; he spoke out against Stalin's 'debasement' of the revolution, and he publicly defended the revolutionary honour of those who were forced in the Moscow trials to spit upon themselves and their work.

But did Rosmer break with bolshevism as such or only with its Stalinist distortion? This is a difficult question to answer. His friendship with Trotsky, and his agreement with the fundamental ideas of the murdered Russian revolutionary (with the exception of the 'sectarian' aspects of Trotsky's work), might lead one to conclude that at bottom Alfred Rosmer remained faithful to the ideas which he held when he joined the Communist International. In December 1952 Rosmer wrote: 'The division of the (Russian) revolution into two phases, the second of which steadily moves further away from the first, eventually to negate it completely, is neither arbitrary nor tendentious; it corresponds to the reality'. And even if Rosmer adds that in Lenin's time, too, 'mistakes and errors' were, of course, committed, it is still clear that for Rosmer there was a *qualitative* difference between the Leninist and Stalinist phases of Bolshevism.

At another point in the same text Rosmer noted that Stalin had completely denied and abandoned the ideas of his 'teacher', Lenin, concerning the concept and nature of the state, particularly as expressed in his *State and Revolution*. This provides clear proof that Alfred Rosmer never entertained the idea of tracing to Bolshevism itself, even in its pre-Stalinist form, the cause of the 'debasement' which was later to find its most horrifying expression in Stalinism.

This attitude, however one may judge it, had its origin in the great experience that the October Revolution represented for Rosmer. For him and his friends it stood for the direct continuation of the internationalist position held by the Russian social-democratic followers of Lenin and Trotsky during the first world war. Writing in moving terms of Alfred Rosmer, the man who never put himself forward as 'leader' but who was one in the widest and loftiest sense of the word, Camus referred to his own 'bad conscience' on the 'rare occasions when I do not agree with Rosmer, for example when, out of his deep attachment to the epoch of which he is speaking, he justifies everything that happened,

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even Kronstadt. It seems to me that he underrates the immense impact of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by the Bolsheviks. Whatever justification there may have been for this step, it was the outward and visible sign that the arbitrary actions which had up to then been justified because they were directed against the former exploiters, could also be directed against the revolutionaries '.

To these words, which embody an essential, if not the decisive, problem of bolshevism, Camus added: ' Confronted by such witnesses (as Rosmer), and seeing with what struggles and sacrifices their lives were filled, we may well ask ourselves, who did not live through those days of hope, what right we have on this question to do other than listen and understand '.

The fact remains that a revolutionary syndicalist who was also a humanist was deeply marked by the epoch of revolutionary Russia and its communist exponents. Alfred Rosmer was the last of a generation who had a profound belief in the ' classical ' proletarian revolution, and who, despite all defeats and disappointments, remained convinced that the proletariat had a mission to fulfil.

A man has passed from us who, in 1960, at the age of eighty-three, still attached to the traditions of the heroic era of the first world war, signed a public declaration ' outlawing ' the war that France was conducting in Algeria. He retained his revolutionary convictions to the end, and will remain for us a witness of that great and hopeful era. Hope he retained even during the times of decline and defeat, and amidst the lies which were presented to the world as ' theses ' Alfred Rosmer believed firmly and to the last that only the truth was revolutionary. It was not for nothing that Alfred Griot took his pseudonym from an Ibsen character. In Ibsen's *Enemy of the People* Dr. Stockman, when he discovers that the wells which feed his city are poisoned, says: ' If the well-being of my city rests on a lie, then let my city perish so that truth may triumph '.

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POKROVSKY AND RUSSIAN HISTORY

Roman Szporluk

IN July 1931 Pokrovsky wrote the introduction to a new edition of his popular textbook, *A Brief History of Russia.* In it he defended himself from the accusations of Marxist unorthodoxy which had so often been made against him. The main issue was merchant capital and its role in the history of Russia. In Pokrovsky's *skhema* the development of Russia was not an isolated, self-sufficient process. On the contrary, with the appearance of merchant capitalism in Europe, history, according to Pokrovsky (and Marx), became world history. What happened in Russia was influenced by, and in its own turn influenced, events in other countries. The Soviet ideologists who attacked Pokrovsky, impressed perhaps by the theory of socialism in one country, thought that 'internal factors' were the only important ones; in short, they began to view the past in terms of 'history in one country'. On many earlier occasions Pokrovsky had extensively quoted *Kapital* and *The German Ideology* to prove that Marx recognised the existence of periods when trade had dominated production and when merchant capital had enjoyed political power. Pokrovsky also reminded his critics that Lenin had read and approved of the *Brief History.* In his new introduction, he quoted Lenin again to prove that he had recognised the importance of merchant capital for Russia; those who said that merchant capital was 'an invention of Pokrovsky' or that he 'had taken it from Bogdanov' had evidently not read their Lenin very carefully.

'My originality', Pokrovsky wrote, '—a very relative originality—consisted merely in this: that from the indisputable *economic* fact that in Russia merchant capital was the predecessor of industrial capital, I tried to draw the political conclusion that the formation of the "Russian Empire" was influenced by this same merchant capital'. Pokrovsky had reached this conclusion independently of Lenin. Only after his interpretation of Russian history was outlined in 1910–11, did he learn that Lenin had reached an identical view almost twenty years earlier. Later Pokrovsky was to find in *The German Ideology* that Marx and Engels had been aware of the political significance of commerce during the disintegration of feudalism. His 'rhetorical exaggerations' in the earlier editions notwithstanding, Pokrovsky continued to stand by his original view. Merchant capital may not have been the 'maker' of the Romanov monarchy, but it was 'its principal supporting force, the foundation on which the Romanovs could build their bureaucratic monarchy; for bureaucracy can only grow on a bourgeois soil'.[1]

* * *

[1] M. N. Pokrovsky, *Brief History of Russia*, trans. by D. S. Mirsky, Vol. I (New York, 1933), pp. 11–13.

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MIKHAIL NIKOLAEVICH POKROVSKY WAS BORN on 30 August 1868 in Moscow. He studied at Moscow University (1887–1891) where his most important teachers were Paul Vinogradov and Vasili Kliuchevsky. When Professor Vinogradov was preparing *Readings in the History of the Middle Ages* he invited Pokrovsky to be a contributor. Between 1897 and 1899 four volumes of readings appeared, which included eight articles by Pokrovsky. These were followed by the publication of Pokrovsky's original research in Russian history. The public favourably received his study of local self-government in old Russia (1903) and another one on 'Zemsky Sobor and Parliament', published in a symposium called *The Constitutional State* (1905). Many years later, Pokrovsky described this period of his life as one of 'democratic illusions and economic materialism'. He explained his early inclination towards economic materialism by his descent from 'the petty-bourgeois milieu, the burgher milieu', where the economic motives of human activity are most clear.

On the outbreak of the 1905 revolution, Pokrovsky was a 'bourgeois democrat'. When it was over, he had become a Bolshevik: 'I joined the only revolutionary party there was'. The class struggle, he said later, was transformed at that time from a theory to a fact of life. He lectured at secret or semi-legal gatherings, and wrote articles on current topics in the social-democratic papers. He became a member of the Moscow committee of the RSDLP, which subsequently sent him as delegate to the London party congress (1907). Upon returning to Russia he went underground, but this did not prevent him from editing and writing a number of articles for a perfectly legal, if admittedly radically-oriented, *History of Russia in the Nineteenth Century* (issued by the Granat Publishing House, St. Petersburg, 1907–10). In these articles Pokrovsky's synthesis of Russian history began to take shape. He contributed chapters on Russia at the end of the eighteenth century, on the reigns of Paul and Alexander I, on the Decembrists, and several articles on the foreign relations of Russia, the conquest of the Caucasus, and the Reform of 1861.

While still working for the Granat series, Pokrovsky emigrated to France. He believed that a new revolutionary situation was to be expected soon, whereas Lenin, with whom he had a long conversation, was then advocating legal work. 'I was arguing that his course was leading directly into the revisionist and reformist mud, that it was pushing the Russian workers away from revolution, towards Bernsteinism'.[2] Lenin's answers did not satisfy Pokrovsky and he joined Bogdanov, Lunacharsky, Alexinsky and others, in the *Vpered* group. It was as a member of this group that Pokrovsky taught at the Capri and Bologna party schools; the Leninists trained their men at Longjumeau. His articles on current issues appeared in *Vpered* and in Trotsky's *Pravda* (Vienna). He also reviewed books in 'legal' journals.

[2] M. N. Pokrovsky, 'Lenin kak tip revoliutsionnogo vozhdia', *Pod znamenem marksizma*, No. 2, 1924, p. 65.

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On the occasion of the reigning dynasty's tercentenary, he issued jointly with Trotsky a brochure, *Jubilee of Our Disgrace*, contributing an essay entitled 'Three Hundred Years of the Romanovs and the Pseudo-Romanovs'. But he was devoting most of his time to his *magnum opus* —a history of Russia interpreted in the light of historical materialism. *Russian History from the Earliest Times* began to appear in 1910, the final volume (five) being issued in 1912. The work was a co-operative effort. V. K. Agafonov wrote an introductory chapter on pre-historical Russia; N. M. Nikolsky, the chapters on church and religion; and the 'documentary supplements' and numerous illustrations were the work of V. N. Storozhev. In its definitive form, the history was exclusively Pokrovsky's work and consisted of four volumes instead of the original five. Subsequently Pokrovsky wrote 'An Essay in the History of Russian Culture', and contributed articles to the Granat *Lexicon*, whose seventh edition was then in progress. In the war years, which he spent in France, he wrote for the Russian social-democratic journals, *Golos, Nachalo, Nashe Slovo*, chiefly on the war and its origins. Pokrovsky produced the definitive version of his historical synthesis after the revolution of 1917 in a work that was little suited, as he himself said, for original interpretations: a textbook, the *Brief History of Russia* (1920). 'In exposition, this is probably one of the worst of my books', he said. 'Not all of it was even written; in large part it was just a revised shorthand record' of lectures. This explains why it contained so many slips; Pokrovsky had revised some of his earlier opinions, and 'one may "kill" me, of course, with a whole range of petty contradictions'. The historians of a later generation would take note of all these shortcomings, but they would also concede that they were due to the 'super-devilish conditions' in which the work was done. They would also recognise, he hoped, that it had given them something to start from.[3]

* * *

MANY WRITERS, BOTH SOVIET (after 1934) and the Westerners who followed them, have spoken of the 'lack of clarity' and the 'confusion' in Pokrovsky's periodisation. The answer is very simple. There *is* no periodisation in Pokrovsky, if one expects his history to present the regular succession of 'socio-economic formations', each 'higher' than the preceding one. 'The writer of these lines', Pokrovsky explained in 1924, 'is not much of a follower of schematisation and periodisation in history'. Periodisation he considered 'a very weak device', although it was helpful in teaching. If a historian did not 'make fetishes' out of the landmarks that he himself placed along history's path, but used them as landmarks should be used, only for orientation, they might help the beginner to understand the peculiar features of the past. Since a scheme should have some basic principle, 'I take only one side of the

[3] M. N. Pokrovsky, 'Po povodu stati tov. Rubinshteina', ibid. No. 10/11, 1924, pp. 211–212.

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historical process, that which appears to me to be the most important'.[4] Because of his later reputation, it may be worthwhile to mention that Pokrovsky adopted a political criterion in 'The Soviet Chapter in Our History', dismissing the applicability in this specific case of the economic one. The editors of *Bolshevik* did not agree. Marx's historical periodisation required 'careful treatment' because it was correct and could not be replaced by another. Their view remains unassailable in the Soviet Union today.

Pokrovsky never systematically elaborated his concept of history and sociology, but when he wished to say what history was *not*, he compared these two disciplines. 'Sociology shows only the direction in which we ought to move. It is a schematic map with no mountains, marshes, forests, ravines. To mark all these on the map is the business of concrete historical analysis'.[5] At a conference of Marxist historians Pokrovsky explained that the sociologist could proceed more or less directly from economics, because sociology covered large periods in the history of large nations. But in history 'every particular moment is important'. For example, the conference, if looked at from the sociological point of view, was based on the fact of the socialist revolution, which could itself be explained in economic terms. But the conference could not be understood without particular explanations: 'without the energy of Comrade Gorin there would be no conference', and 'the tempo of the development of Marxism in the [study of] history in our country would no doubt have been slowed down'.

* * * *

THE ACCESSION OF THE ROMANOVS inaugurated what Pokrovsky called the modern period of Russian history.[6] The Romanovs laid the foundations of a political order based on serfdom, officialdom, and a standing army. Their state was created 'by a combination of two social forces, whose basic units were respectively the squire's estate and the merchant's capital'. The new state machinery had already existed in the seventeenth century, but it did not develop fully until the reign of Peter I. Peter's administrative and fiscal reforms served the aims of primary accumulation in Russia during the age of serfdom:

> . . . primary accumulation was the object served by the whole system, just as it was the one object of all Western Europe in the period from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.

The Russian monarchy was one specimen of the species 'bureaucratic states' which, as Pokrovsky wrote in his articles on 'Absolutism' and 'Bureaucracy' for the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia*, had existed in various periods in countries with comparable social and economic structures. These included the Hellenistic monarchies of the East, China, Egypt, the

[4] M. N. Pokrovsky, 'Sovetskaia glava nashei istorii', *Bolshevik*, No. 14, 1924, p. 11.
[5] M. N. Pokrovsky, *Istoricheskaia nauka i borba klassov*, Vol. II (Moscow, 1933), p. 265.
[6] The following account is based on *Brief History*, except where otherwise noted.

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Roman Empire, Byzantium, and the West European monarchies after the decline of the Middle Ages. In Western Europe industrial capitalism succeeded merchant capitalism and the absolute monarchy that promoted its interests; the others declined, stagnated, or relapsed into feudalism.

In the West industrial capitalism superseded merchant capitalism and the absolute monarchy in the eighteenth century; in Russia the reign of merchant capital lasted longer. When industrial capitalism appeared in Russia, it did not overthrow merchant capital; the two existed side by side, the latter retaining the stronger position. The order established early in the eighteenth century survived until the middle of the nineteenth, and only then did it begin to crumble as a result of the rise of industrialism. In its essential features the old Romanov order survived till 1917.

There was a fundamental contradiction between the interests of merchant and industrial capital. The former was interested in making the small producer defenceless, and consequently supported serfdom; the latter required free labour and the development of a market, and so favoured the liberation of the peasants. Ultimately one would succeed the other, and then itself be superseded by socialism. But this succession of systems was of a logical or, as Pokrovsky would have said, a sociological order. Merchant capital continued to exist in Russia long after industrial capital had taken root, and even after it was fully developed merchant capital continued to grow and attained its highest prosperity in the second half of the nineteenth century. Here, as he did when he wrote of early Russian history, Pokrovsky recognised the impact of outside developments on the social and economic life of Russia. The development of industrialism in England stimulated the growth of merchant capitalism in Russia when England began her large-scale import of Russian grain. In general, the export of grain enabled Russian merchant capital to attain to its highest development. Pokrovsky also regarded Russia's expansion in Asia, which he called the colonial policy of the age of primitive accumulation, as a major factor in her internal evolution.

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DURING THE 1930S POKROVSKY was criticised in the Soviet Union for writing that in the nineteenth century the tsarist government had transferred its support from one class to another (with a corresponding change in the support of the classes for the autocracy). These critics thought that to admit so much freedom of manoeuvre between hostile classes was inconsistent with the Marxist concept of the state as the apparatus of rule by the economically dominant class (though in fact Pokrovsky's concept of tsarism was analogous to Marx's interpretation of French absolutism). Pokrovsky did in fact believe that the tsarist regime at times favoured industrialism to the detriment of the landlord and merchant interests. The adherence of Russia to the continental blockade, for instance, kept the British out of the Russian market and thus

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stimulated the growth of native industry, and tariffs favoured Russian industry during most of the nineteenth century.

Perhaps Pokrovsky's comments on Stolypin's reforms best demonstrate how erroneous it is to see him as a doctrinaire economic materialist. He thought that Stolypin's agrarian reforms belonged to 'the most brilliant period in the activity of the tsarist bureaucracy since the 1860s'. Stolypin's agrarian policy was not demagogy, as the Kadets had claimed. The abolition of the village commune, which was the essence of that policy, opened the last door for the development of industrial capitalism in Russia. These reforms, however, were carried through by a regime that was a creation of merchant capitalism, that is, of an earlier stage of capitalist development. The reactionary tsarist government accomplished in Russia what it required a bourgeois revolution to do in France. To question whether such things were possible indicated a belief in 'purest metaphysics':

> One should not imagine things in this way: Boom, boom, boom—here comes merchant capital; it has arrived. Boom, boom, boom—here comes industrial capital; it has arrived. Boom, boom, boom—here comes socialism; it has arrived. One must not imagine things in such a childish way. . . . The living historical process is a combination of all kinds of currents. . . . If history were not so involved, it would not be worthwhile to occupy oneself with history; sociology would be quite enough . . . in practice all causes are complex . . . they run ahead at one time and . . . retreat at another . . .[7]

Russia was a good example of the complexity of this 'living historical process': a country of developed industrial capital had, at the end of the nineteenth century, the political structure formed in the eighteenth century. 'It was only the workers' revolution of 1905 that gave the bourgeoisie a permanent bourgeois representation.' Why did the Russian bourgeoisie fail to win power for so long, and why, when it did win it, did it keep it only for eight months?

Pokrovsky offered two complementary answers to this question. The bourgeoisie, or more exactly, the bourgeois intelligentsia, had always feared the peasantry. (Pokrovsky believed that the industrialists had never been revolutionaries; it was the intelligentsia who, without understanding the 'economic realities', paved the way for capitalism, while imagining themselves to be fighting tyranny and promoting freedom.) The fourteenth of December 1825 was the first and *last* revolutionary action of the Russian bourgeoisie (that is, the intelligentsia). The Decembrists could easily have won on that day:

> It was not so much Nicholas and his grapeshot that triumphed over the Decembrists on the Senate Square, as the *ghost of the Pugachev rebellion.* Fear of that ghost . . . ruined forever the prospect of a bourgeois revolution in Russia.

[7] M. N. Pokrovsky, *Ocherki po istorii revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Rossii XIX i XX vv* (Moscow, 1927), pp. 118, 120 and 126–127.

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Second, Pokrovsky contended that during the nineteenth century Russian industrialists depended on and benefited from the support of the autocracy. This support led the bourgeoisie to remain aloof from liberal movements, and the progressive landowners to stand in opposition (for example, in the *Zemstvo* movement). Ultimately the interests of autocracy and industrial capitalism were irreconcilable; but when the industrialists had grasped this, after the assassination of Stolypin and during the Rasputin era (with its 'completely medieval figures of magicians and miracle-workers' in the positions of real power), it was already too late. Finally, in 1917 the bourgeoisie failed to dissolve its 'fatal alliance' with the left wing of the landowners, who still remained feudal; and as a result, the peasantry, who in the West had followed the bourgeoisie, in Russia supported the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.[8]

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MANY NAÏVE PERSONS, Pokrovsky said, imagined that because the world war 'resulted of iron necessity from the economic system of the preceding decades', it was not worthwhile to search for the men who were responsible for its outbreak. He did not agree. The sociological inevitability of certain processes notwithstanding, the historian had the duty to investigate the actual events and to determine the responsibility of individual leaders. It was not the historian's task to reach *a priori* conclusions about what given groups or governments *had* in any case to do; the historian ought to provide documentary material that was 'unimpeachable and possessed validity for all'.[9]

The historian had to look for his answers in the sources, instead of referring to 'sociological laws', or indicating the social background of historical actors. The Decembrist Pestel was of noble origin, yet he was not a representative of *pomeshchik* interests; what mattered was that 'he reflected the interests of some other class, not the nobility. . . . He was . . . the first political spokesman for the interests of the petty bourgeoisie' in Russia.[10]

But how is one to know whose interests a man 'reflects' if he himself is not aware of being anybody's spokesman? Pokrovsky's answer may be found in his comment on Boris Godunov: If from the very beginning his policy bore a definite class impress, it was only because 'any and every policy is a class policy and cannot be anything else'. When the Emperor Paul, following a personal caprice, issued a series of decrees that made him an enemy of the ruling class, he could not change the laws of history: having turned against the nobility, he

[8] M. N. Pokrovsky, 'Burzhuaziia v Rossii', *Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia*, Vol. VIII, col. 185.

[9] See B. E. Schmitt, 'Russia and the War', *Foreign Affairs*, October 1934, for long quotations from Pokrovsky's introduction to *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia v epokhu imperializma*, Vol. I. pp. viii–x.

[10] *Ocherki po istorii revolutsionnogo dvizheniia* . . ., p. 25.

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involuntarily and unknowingly became an 'incarnation of the hopes and aspirations' of the oppressed classes.[11]

Pokrovsky's method is also shown in his treatment of Peter, 'the most active, most gifted and altogether the most remarkable of the Romanovs'. At the end of the seventeenth century 'there were present all the conditions requisite for the development of large-scale production', and yet Petrine large-scale industry undoubtedly collapsed; political conditions did not encourage the growth of Russian capitalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On the contrary, the political framework of a state that was controlled by the nobles prevented this capitalism from developing. 'Here, as in other fields, Peter's autocracy could not create anything, but it did destroy much.'[12]

If I understand Pokrovsky correctly, he considers three factors in his treatment of this question: economic conditions (ripe for the rise of capitalism); the political framework (hostile to capitalism); and Peter's personal policy (*for* capitalism, but in the wrong way). Peter's very method of influencing industry was such as to 'frighten capital away rather than to attract it'. He lacked the patience to wait until capital began by itself to flow into business, and 'tried to drive capital into the manufacture of linen-cloth with a club'. Peter firmly believed in the club as a tool of economic development; he tried 'to drive the Russian bourgeoisie into the capitalistic Eden with a cudgel'. It was the analogy with another more contemporary figure, who also believed in the club as a tool of economic development, that presumably made Pokrovsky's interpretation of Peter the Great an uncomfortable one to uphold in the 1930s.

* * * *

POKROVSKY DID NOT WRITE a history of the 1917 Revolution, but he considered it, on several levels, in his articles and lectures. First, he described the economic and social structure in Russia, where two 'sociological' epochs existed at the same time. The coexistence of modern industrial establishments and primitive peasant huts was evidence not of the basic backwardness of Russia, but, on the contrary, of its 'catastrophically fast' growth.[13] This made possible the rise of the most radical and revolutionary ideologies, but it did not suffice to produce a socialist revolution. In other writings Pokrovsky analysed the effect of the war on Russia. The war was the outcome of the operation of the world economy (he believed tsarist Russia less responsible for the war than the other great powers), and it had destroyed the economy of Russia, thus giving rise to a revolution there.[14] In 1917 two issues dominated in Russia: land and peace. These did not in themselves

11 M. N. Pokrovsky, *History of Russia from the Earliest Times to the Rise of Commercial Capitalism*, trans. and ed. by J. D. Clarkson and M. R. M. Griffiths (New York, 1931), p. 165; *Istoriia Rossii v XIX veke* [Granat], Vol. I (St. Petersburg, n.d.), p. 27.

12 *Brief History*, Vol. I, p. 88; *History of Russia*, pp. 283–285, 341.

13 *Istoricheskaia nauka . . .*, Vol. I, pp. 148–149.

14 *Bolshevik*, No. 14, 1924, p. 11.

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require a socialist solution, but they gave the Bolsheviks a practical chance of winning power. Had the peasants received the land in 1905, or during 1905–17, the fall of tsarism and the war would have taken place in different circumstances and would have had different effects. The Kadets made a fatal mistake by not asking for peace in 1917 (the German bourgeoisie concluded peace in time to save themselves from defeat). This failure to act was understandable in view of the past, but nevertheless an error.[15]

Pokrovsky believed that the Bolsheviks could have taken power in Petrograd in March 1917. 'If Lenin had been in Petersburg, if the Bolshevik leading group had been there, if the Bolsheviks, like the others, had not been caught by the revolution completely unaware (as they themselves unanimously admit)', the regime established after October 1917 could have been established much earlier.[16]

In an essay on Lenin (1924) Pokrovsky chose 'colossal political courage' as his most characteristic quality. Political courage (*muzhestvo*) was something very different from ordinary bravery (*khrabrost*). Lenin, unlike the other revolutionaries, 'on his own responsibility took steps on which depended not only his own fate, but the fate of his party, of the entire country, and to some extent of the world revolution'. Pokrovsky enumerated some of these decisive moments in Lenin's career: the decision in favour of an armed rising in 1904–05; the decision to turn to legal work after the defeat of the 1905 revolution; the decision to accept the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty. (It was on these two latter occasions, Pokrovsky recalled, that he, Pokrovsky, with many others, had misunderstood the real situation and had opposed Lenin.) All these decisions required enormous courage. The social-revolutionaries, who held power in the summer of 1917, did not try to implement their own programme of nationalisation of the land, and also allowed the Constituent Assembly to be postponed. They lacked political courage, even though much less of it was needed for them to say, 'the landlords' land is hereby confiscated and transferred to the peasants', than Lenin had to have during Brest, when he was opposed by the rest of the party leaders. Chernov, the S-R leader, was a sincere and honest man, but he was not a leader.[17]

This summary gives only part of Pokrovsky's interpretation of the Russian Revolution, but it serves to illuminate what he meant when he said that

> with a purely economic explanation, by appealing exclusively to economic laws, and ignoring everything else, one could not foresee what would happen—that we would break through to socialism . . . in defiance of narrow economic laws.[18]

[15] M. N. Pokrovsky, *et al.*, *Intelligentsiia i revoliutsiia* (Moscow, 1922), pp. 27–32.
[16] *Ocherki po istorii revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia* . . ., pp. 182–183.
[17] *Pod znamenem marksizma*, No. 2, 1924, pp. 64–68.
[18] *Istoricheskaia nauka* . . ., Vol. II, p. 269.

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It is not difficult to see why the 'break-through' interpretation of October 1917 ultimately proved unacceptable in the Soviet Union. The revolution took place in a country in which merchant capitalism still existed together with industrial capitalism. But merchant capital belongs to the age of primitive or primary accumulation, whose burden lies on the peasantry and the colonies. Therefore primary accumulation would have to continue. Pokrovsky's *skhema* appeared to vindicate Preobrazhensky's theory of 'socialist primary accumulation', while its world perspective bore a strong resemblance to the global visions of Trotsky.

* * * *

POKROVSKY RETURNED TO RUSSIA in August 1917. In November he became chairman of the Moscow Soviet. He went to Brest-Litovsk, but opposed the conclusion of the peace treaty and joined the Left Opposition. In March 1918 he became chairman of the Moscow regional *Sovnarkom*. From 1918 until his death Pokrovsky was a deputy Commissar for Education. There was hardly any educational reform of those years in whose preparation he did not take part. He was one of the founders of the Communist Academy and of the Institute of Red Professors, and headed both for periods of time. He also organised the workers' faculties, the *rabfaki*. Most important of all, he organised and directed the Central State Archives of the RSFSR, and was the editor of *Krasny Arkhiv*.

Pokrovsky also helped to establish RANION. the Russian Association of Social Science Research Institutes, which provided a place for non-Marxist Russian scholars, and until the end of 1927 was its president. In 1925 he became the first president of the Society of Marxist Historians, and edited *Istorik-Marksist*. In 1928 he travelled with a group of Soviet scholars to Berlin for the 'Soviet-German Historical Week' and to the International Historical Congress in Oslo. On each occasion he presented a paper on Russian absolutism. Pokrovsky's highest post in the party came in 1930, when he was already very ill. He then became a member of the Central Control Commission's presidium. He was also a member of the All-Union and the All-Russian Central Executive Committees.

Pokrovsky's least disputed achievement, at any rate in the West (for in the Soviet Union he was subsequently criticised even for this work), was his work in collecting and publishing historical documents. In addition to *Krasny Arkhiv*, a journal where numerous documents were published, Pokrovsky also organised the publication of collections of documents on, *inter alia*, the Decembrists, the Pugachev rebellion, and the 1917 Revolution. (Incidentally, the Decembrist papers, uncovered only in 1917, led Pokrovsky to revise some of his earlier opinions on this subject.) He presided over the special committee for the publication of documents on 'International Relations in the Age of Imperialism'.

In the 1920s Pokrovsky's historical *skhema* was the subject of continuous controversy and debate. The participants, A. N. Rozhkov,

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Militsa Nechkina, A. Slepkov, S. Tomsinsky, N. Rubinshtein, V. A. Shestakov, and others, included Pokrovsky's associates and disciples from the Red Professors' Institute. Pokrovsky was also engaged in a debate on Chernyshevsky with Riazanov and Steklov, and in a controversy on *Narodnaia Volya* with I. A. Teodorovich. But the most famous discussion was the one with Trotsky on Russian absolutism; this began with Pokrovsky's review of Trotsky's *1905* in *Krasnaia Nov* (1922), and Trotsky's answer in two long *feuilletons* in *Pravda*. The 1920s were thus anything but a period of ideological 'domination' for Pokrovsky and his school.

Pokrovsky wrote many articles and edited collections of essays on the non-Marxist Russian historians, including Karamzin, Kavelin, Chicherin, Solovyov, Kliuchevsky, and Miliukov, attempting to demonstrate the impact of their political attitudes on their views of the past. He believed that even some Marxist writers, such as Plekhanov and Trotsky, had not escaped the ideological influence of bourgeois theories. Occasionally he seemed to deny that the non-Marxist writings had any scholarly value, and some of his statements might suggest that he believed history to be no more than class ideology. During the thirties and later, these two issues were raised in the anti-Pokrovsky campaign. Pokrovsky said many different things, however; for example, he once said that only fools would 'throw Kliuchevsky or Solovyov under the table', and appealed to Soviet students to learn their method of historical research from the 'old scholars'. There is little doubt that the anti-Pokrovsky campaign was based largely on misrepresentations of his ideas and activities.

Who has not heard of that famous saying of Pokrovsky: 'History is politics turned into the past'? Several years after Stalin's death, a leading historian quoted it in an article condemning Pokrovsky for his 'nihilist attitude' towards history. And even as late as 1963 one western author said of his bibliography that he had 'found it unnecessary to include the works of M. N. Pokrovsky (to whom history was only "politics turned into the past")'. In the original passage, however, Pokrovsky, referring to some pre-revolutionary historians, said that they all 'directly reflected a definite class struggle in nineteenth century Russia, and as I put it on an earlier occasion, "history written by these gentlemen represents nothing but politics projected into the past".' Today Soviet writers have changed their minds about Pokrovsky and are quoting him correctly.[19]

Some of the 'bourgeois' historians against whom Pokrovsky had written earlier (Tarle, Platonov) were arrested in 1929–31; this series of arrests had hardly ended when a new wave began, at the end of 1931. Its victims included many persons associated with Pokrovsky.

At this time Pokrovsky, then almost on his deathbed, defended himself against the attempt to question his Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy

[19] *Voprosy istorii*, No. 8, 1963, p. 39.

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and his academic competence that had appeared in a recent volume on party history edited by E. Iaroslavsky. Pokrovsky replied to the critics in an article that reached the office of *Istorik-Marksist* in November 1931. He did not live to see it published; on 10 April 1932 he died in the Kremlin hospital. His reply may have been the last thing he wrote. Iaroslavsky's book, he said, misrepresented his interpretation of the causes of the world war, and fabricated imaginary differences between himself and Lenin. Moreover, his critics hid under the cloak of collective anonymity. He had also been rebuked for quoting approvingly opponents of the Bolsheviks. 'Yes, we, the Old Bolsheviks of those days,' Pokrovsky wrote, 'considered ourselves obliged to do so, esteemed "Anonymous Author". If our opponent was right about anything, we said so.' Pokrovsky recalled that Lenin at one time said the Menshevik Martov was right, and the Bolshevik Pyatakov wrong; that he had also preferred Hobson to Hilferding. 'But of what use are the mores and rules of the Old Bolsheviks to our "Anonymous Author". This does not concern him. Pokrovsky quotes Volontaire [Pavlovich]. But Volontaire had an incorrect, un-Leninist concept of imperialism! Tally-ho, let's go for Pokrovsky! . . . He quoted Pavlovich—that means he is a heretic! What's there to talk about with him?' [20]

The campaign against Pokrovsky, which began before his death, was at first confined to conference halls and the columns of scholarly journals. It went on unnoticed by the wider public until Pokrovsky was officially condemned in 1934, and again, more openly, in 1936.

[20] M. N. Pokrovsky, 'Po povodu nekotoroi putanitsy', *Istorik-Marksist*, No. 1/2 (23/24), 1932, pp. 23–24.

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RASKOLNIKOV

Ex-Insider, V

W. On 2 April 1964, *Izvestiya* published a long article about the 'Red Admiral', Fedor Raskolnikov. It described him as one of the first Bolsheviks in the Baltic Fleet, a party member since 1910, who had taken part in the October revolution and had subsequently distinguished himself as 'a hero in the civil war whose exploits became legendary'. You met Raskolnikov during the twenties in Moscow and were friends with him for many years after. How did you first meet him and what did you think of him?

P. The odd thing about it was that at first and for quite some time after I did not even realise that I had met Raskolnikov. It happened this way. One frosty December morning in 1924 I arrived at the Byelorusski Station in Moscow. It was my first visit to the Soviet Union. I fondly believed that I had prepared myself thoroughly for this visit. I had read masses of pamphlets and journals and thought I knew all that was essential about Russia's internal and external problems. True, I did not know a word of Russian and could not even read the Russian alphabet; but I had been told that that didn't matter. International organisations, and especially the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI), to which I had been delegated by my party, didn't have language difficulties; I could get by with German, French, or English. But language difficulties began immediately at the station. Somehow I had managed to miss the comrade who was supposed to meet me there, and I had to make my way to Comintern headquarters with the aid of a small piece of paper and desperate gestures. Dead tired and frozen, I eventually succeeded in getting as far as the anteroom of 16 Mokhavaya —only to discover how strictly they kept to the rules of party conspiracy. I had no pass and it was strictly forbidden to say anything about either myself or the party which had sent me. It took a long time and several telephone calls before I was admitted. I was told to report to 'Comrade Petrov' on the fourth floor. Even that was not so easy as the corridors seemed like a labyrinth and most of the doors were unlabelled. A friendly young man whom I eventually asked for help suggested that I should try Petrov of the Eastern department.

While waiting for him to be free to see me, I met some of the staff of the Eastern department of the ECCI. Most of them were middle-aged men, simply dressed in Russian *rubashka* and khaki trousers, busy over their papers. They were nearly all veterans of the revolution and of the civil war in the Eastern areas of the Soviet Union—the Caucasus, Central Asia, or Eastern Siberia. Some of them spoke English or French, and a few of them had some—purely theoretical—knowledge of the countries with which they were supposed to concern themselves. But there wasn't a single official who had ever set foot in any of the Eastern countries. I was immediately surrounded and overwhelmed with questions about all sorts of general topics, although they avoided any kind of organisational or personal question. Then the padded door at the back of the room opened and I was asked to enter. Inside, a man of middle height

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who, in contrast to the officials whom I had met so far, wore European and even elegant clothes welcomed me cordially. He introduced himself: ' Petrov, Chief of the Eastern department, do please sit down '.

Petrov looked younger than his collaborators. He was fair, blue-eyed, and clean-shaven, and looked more like an English student than a Russian Bolshevik. And although we established good relations at once, and met repeatedly both privately and in conferences, it was only after many weeks that I learnt—by chance—that he was Raskolnikov.

After that it was easy. Raskolnikov himself told me many details about his past, especially incidents from the time of the fighting near the mouth of the Volga (when, as commander of the Soviet Volga flotilla, he engaged a superior force of Wrangel's troops), and his successful encounter with the British expeditionary corps near Enzeli in Northern Persia.

W. Do you know why he was transferred from the diplomatic service to the Comintern?

P. That was because of the change in Soviet foreign policy in the early twenties. Russia had to have a breathing space, and this meant reaching some kind of *modus vivendi* with the Western powers, and particularly Britain. When MacDonald's Labour Government came in, Moscow hoped for better Anglo-Soviet relations. When the Labour Government fell and the Conservatives returned to power, Moscow once again felt itself menaced. So it was all the more important to avoid conflicts and to demonstrate the Soviet Government's good will vis-à-vis Britain. Britain always reacted with particular sensitivity to Soviet moves in the South; it was part of the traditional apprehension about a potential Russian menace to the Indian North-West frontier; so London watched with increasing concern the efforts made by the Soviet Union in the early twenties to increase its influence in Persia and Afghanistan.

W. At that time Raskolnikov was Soviet Ambassador in Kabul?

P. Yes, his appointment to this post in 1921 and his subsequent activities in Afghanistan made difficulties between Russia and Britain. Raskolnikov also had a kind of personal account to settle with Britain. In 1918, when he was a member of the Revolutionary War Council of the Baltic Fleet, he had been taken prisoner by the British during a reconnoitring expedition, and spent several months in Brixton prison, until he was exchanged against British officers held by the Soviet Government. Then there was the encounter in Northern Persia. Raskolnikov interpreted his mission in Afghanistan as a ceaseless battle against the British. In one of her letters (which were first published in 1963), Larissa Reisner, who was then Raskolnikov's wife, wrote: ' Last night Fedya [i.e., Raskolnikov] was with the Emir. Everything is going to be all right. . . . We are helped by the new British Ambassador who is already hated by all Kabul. He behaves like a bully in a colony. We must be grateful to him. But how well Fedya carries on with his policy. . .'.

Soviet relations with Britain became increasingly strained, and Raskolnikov's activities all but provoked a military clash with Britain at the Afghan frontier. That was in 1923, and Raskolnikov was recalled. For a time he was withdrawn from the diplomatic service, and there was a tendency in some party circles to make him the scapegoat for

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Soviet failures in the Near East. Several months passed before Raskolnikov's friends could again dare to propose him for a leading post. Zinoviev was busy reorganising the apparatus of the Comintern Executive. Radek—who had compromised himself badly in the disaster of the German communist party in October 1923—was removed from the Central European department and temporarily appointed head of the Eastern department. Shortly after that he was out of the Comintern apparatus altogether, and Raskolnikov was put in charge of the Eastern department. But he had to work under the name of Petrov. They didn't want any visible connection between the ex-ambassador and the head of an important Comintern department.

W. Was Raskolnikov happier in this job than as a diplomatist?

P. He didn't really like his job at the Comintern. He told me he felt uneasy there. By nature and by habit he was a man of quick, direct, and decisive action, and he found it difficult to adjust himself to the new role he was supposed to play. He was totally uninterested in the finer points of theory, and was quite incapable of playing the part of a cog in a bureaucratic machine. And at that time the Comintern was just in the process of transforming itself from a revolutionary force into a bureaucratic apparatus that was visibly grinding to a halt. After the defeats in Italy and Germany, the Comintern leaders were trying to face the fact that the revolutionary post-war tide had ebbed, and that, temporarily at least, they had to employ new and more flexible tactics if they wanted to gain influence on the European working classes.

W. But how did that affect the Eastern department?

P. Of course, all the new theories and slogans about the temporary stabilisation of capitalism had little meaning for the Eastern countries, where the Comintern had scarcely got a foothold. Nor did anyone seem to have any idea how to set about getting one. They lacked practical knowledge about the situation in the Eastern countries and, more important even, they lacked a focal point from which the colonial revolution could have been initiated and organised. The Baku congress of the Eastern Peoples of 1920 produced many resounding anti-imperialist resolutions, but the colonial peoples themselves were not there. They did not hear about their impending liberation from British and French colonial rule. The only serious reaction to the Baku congress came from the colonial administrators who redoubled their precautions against Soviet agents in the colonial territories. So the Eastern department of the Comintern was still trying to make its first contacts with the Eastern countries. It was an uphill task. In the countries bordering on Russia—Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan—Moscow's policy was to support them against Britain. The Comintern was supposed to plant the first seeds of a communist movement in these countries. But the difficulties were enormous. The nationalists were unwilling to tolerate communist movements. For instance, while the Soviet Government was doing everything it could to help Mustapha Kemal, the Turkish communist party was cruelly suppressed. In countries further afield, in India, Indonesia, Indochina, etc., it even proved impossible to establish any direct contacts. While Raskolnikov was in charge they tried to establish contacts with student groups, political emigrés and nationalist leaders through the

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European communist parties; instructions to that effect were sent to London, Paris, and Amsterdam. A few individual politicians from these countries, most of them very young, came to Moscow. And that was practically all.

W. But what about China?

P. Well, China was really the concern of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and the Russian central committee. The Eastern department had very little to do with it.

W. Did Raskolnikov help to work out the theoretical directives of the Comintern?

P. Raskolnikov's theoretical talents were never very highly esteemed. He had no basic Marxist training, and he wasn't really interested in theories and programmes. During the endless discussions on theoretical and programmatic questions he usually kept silent, without troubling to hide his boredom. Just once in a while he intervened briefly, but only to assert his authority as head of the department on one point or another.

W. Did he have no intellectual interests?

P. On the contrary, he had a very lively, active mind. But his interests were literary rather than political. He had a very thorough knowledge of Russian literature, poetry as well as prose. He was really a literary connoisseur, with decided esthetic views and a great contempt for the pseudo-literature which was trying to make its way with the help of ultra-proletarian and ultra-revolutionary slogans. What mattered most to him was the purity of the Russian language and the special mission which he thought Russian literature had to fulfil. He seemed indifferent during political debates, but he always came to life in discussions as soon as they touched on a literary question. His true profession, he felt, was as a prose writer, and plays as well. He was at one time the editor of *Krasnaya Nov,* which had a very high reputation. He wrote several books and pamphlets about the history of the Red Fleet—mostly about his own experiences during the civil war years. He wrote a play, 'Robespierre', which in the twenties and thirties was staged not only in Russia but also in Paris. He was a member of the collegium of the Commissariat for Education when Lunacharsky was commissar and when Krupskaya also worked there. And for a time he was also the chairman of the committee in charge of the reorganisation of the theatre (*glavrepertkom*). But these special interests gradually diminished Raskolnikov's authority in the Comintern. He participated *ex officio* in Executive meetings which dealt with questions concerning his department, but his presence there was hardly more than a formality. The routine work of the department was carried out by specialised officials. In most cases Raskolnikov merely endorsed their work. Their output, consisting of 'open letters', resolutions, or directives, was as a rule very elaborate and studded with quotations and good advice, but it contained little about the concrete tasks of the workers and peasants in the countries concerned. I remember that Raskolnikov used to read these resolutions again and again; once in a while he would ask for additional explanations about some wholly irrelevant point, and finally, before signing the document, he might improve the style a bit or add a comma where it had been omitted.

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W. Did Raskolnikov take part in the inner-party struggles? Was he active as a member of the opposition?

P. He took it for granted that he must keep aloof from any power struggle within the party. It was not long after Lenin's death, and the idea that his closest collaborators might seriously disagree among themselves was dismissed as a mere phantasy. That was roughly Raskolnikov's attitude. He was completely loyal to the leadership of the party although he had no very clear idea of the problems which arose after Lenin's death and of the way in which they could or should be solved. It's up to the leaders of the party—Raskolnikov once told me—to formulate the problems and to think about their solution.

W. Did you argue with him about this?

P. I once tried to talk to him about the role of the individual party member. I said that to transfer the responsibility for thinking and for decisions to a small number of leaders at the top struck me and other foreign communists as something that could not be reconciled with the fundamental principles of Bolshevism. Raskolnikov listened attentively, then tried to end the conversation with the remark: 'Well, there is no other communist party which has hundreds of thousands of members and which is responsible for a country of many millions.' I said in that case the role of the party was bound to change and it was possible for a leading group to emerge which, instead of expressing the will of the party, would stand above the party and eventually enforce its will on the party. Raskolnikov did not reply, but he returned to the question in a different context in a later conversation, when he suggested that there was free discussion and decision within the leading group and that the view of the Politbureau majority in that way became the view of the party majority and of the party as a whole. At that time, in 1925, the idea that the party could ever be subjected to the will of a minority of the central committee, or even to that of a single individual, was not even considered worth discussing.

W. What did Raskolnikov think of the various leading personalities of the Comintern and the Russian party?

P. At our very first meeting Raskolnikov suggested that I should use my stay in Moscow to find out about the apparatus of the Executive, and about 'Soviet reality'. I was in a hurry to settle the issues which had brought me to Moscow; but Raskolnikov thought otherwise. He told the staff of the department in my presence: 'The comrades who visit us must first of all learn to wait patiently. A visit of a few days or of one or two weeks is out of the question. We shall probably keep this comrade here for several months so that he gets to know things from his own experience and has something to say when he returns to his own country.' He also mentioned the impending meeting of the enlarged Executive of the Comintern, and said that as I happened to be in Moscow I should take part. It was also taken for granted that I would acquire at least some elementary knowledge of the Russian language. The people in the department did their best during my stay to give me all the information I required. Raskolnikov himself introduced me to leading personalities of the Comintern, especially the members of the Russian delegation. At that time most of Lenin's close collaborators were still active

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in the Comintern. I was introduced to the members of the Presidium and the Secretariat, among them Zinoviev, Bukharin, Manuilsky, and Lozovsky. Both before and after the sessions (and even during the sessions, as hardly anyone was capable of listening for any length of time to the endlessly long speeches and their translation), I had the opportunity to talk with the delegates of the Russian party and take part in informal discussions.

W. Do you remember whether Stalin was present at that Plenum, and whether Raskolnikov drew your attention to him?

P. Raskolnikov first mentioned Stalin in the course of a discussion on the nationality problem in the colonial countries. He suggested it might be useful to consult Stalin on this, as he was an expert. A few days later, just as we were returning from a meeting of the Plenum, we came across a small group of people, among them a man in a grey military coat reaching down to his ankles. Raskolnikov briefly introduced the stranger to me: 'This is comrade Stalin.' He then added a few words about myself and mentioned the problems which we had been discussing in the Eastern department. Stalin said the best time for a talk would be on one of the next few days when he would be at a meeting of one of the commissions. He rarely attended the plenary sessions. Raskolnikov told me that Stalin was not particularly interested in Comintern questions although, as General Secretary of the Russian party, he was naturally kept informed about all that went on. Raskolnikov talked of Stalin in the same way in which he talked of other members of the Politbureau. In so far as he differentiated at all between individual leaders, his yardstick was invariably the rank which they had occupied during Lenin's lifetime, i.e. whether or not they had belonged to Lenin's immediate entourage and had been personally close to him. I think this attitude was shared by most other old party members.

It was in the Czechoslovak commission of the plenum that Stalin spoke for the Executive. His job was to discredit the leaders of the Czechoslovak party—Smeral and Karl Kreibich—for their opportunism. Although the Czechoslovak question was not among the weightiest with which the plenum had to deal, Stalin's speech was awaited with a certain amount of tension. In contrast to other Russian delegates, who spoke German or French, Stalin spoke in Russian. An exceptionally large number of Russians had come to listen to him. But other parties were represented by only a few delegates or even not at all. The most striking thing about Stalin's speech was its sharp, domineering tone, which brooked no contradiction. As soon as he had finished speaking, Stalin left. Even Raskolnikov could not help remarking that this was not according to the rules of international courtesy. But he added afterwards that this was less important that the fact that the delegates had understood the point of view of the Russian party.

W. What was it that led to Raskolnikov's removal from the Eastern department?

P. I remained in close contact with Raskolnikov after the 1925 plenum. Apart from official reasons, I had by then developed a great personal interest in him, and in the course of our many private and official meetings we had become good friends. He was very helpful even in matters which

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had nothing to do with his official function. In one of our last talks he suggested, in a semi-official sort of way, that I should settle in Moscow. I had made considerable progress in Russian and had given the impression that I could easily adapt myself to Soviet conditions. When I turned the suggestion down, he did everything to facilitate my return home.

The next year, in the summer of 1926, I went back to Moscow. This time I had been sent to settle pressing questions which brooked no delay. In the interval there had been many changes in the ECCI, largely as a result of the discussions at the fourteenth congress of the Russian party; the discussions centred on the conflict between the ' new opposition ', led by Zinoviev and Kamenev and supported by the entire Leningrad organisation, and the party majority which was then led jointly by Stalin and Bukharin, while Trotsky and his followers were still keeping silent and stayed more or less neutral. Although this conflict concerned purely internal Russian questions, it paralysed the Comintern Executive. Zinoviev had seen to it that all the important posts in the Comintern apparatus were filled with his supporters and after his defeat at the Russian party congress, Stalin and his supporters set to work to eliminate Zinoviev's influence from the Comintern Executive.

W. And how did they set about it?

P. Well, first of all Comintern officials were put under growing pressure to dissociate themselves from Zinoviev and to give explicit support to the Russian central committee, and at the same time all departments of the Executive were ' strengthened ' by the addition of new staff. The new men gradually took over from the former officials.

When I arrived in Moscow, Raskolnikov was still at his post although a number of his collaborators whom I had got to know the year before had already been removed. The newcomers behaved very arrogantly and they knew less than their predecessors. Raskolnikov seemed even less interested in the affairs of the department than before. He was moody and withdrawn. He suggested that I should discuss all day-to-day problems with the Organisation department to which a number of new men had just been appointed. He gave me no hint as to where he stood in the party dispute. The Organisation department meanwhile proved hopelessly incapable of dealing with my questions. All I found there was a mixture of profound ignorance and rigid formalism. In the circumstances I had no choice but to appeal once again to Raskolnikov for help. ' It appears ', he replied, ' that the questions must be submitted to the Politbureau, and only Zinoviev can bring them forward. But Zinoviev's position in the Politbureau at the moment . . .' He did not finish the sentence, but by then I had learnt enough to guess what he meant.

Even so, Raskolnikov did not drop the matter; a few days later we went together to the Kremlin to see Zinoviev. Raskolnikov was an attentive listener and only intervened when Zinoviev questioned him directly. We discussed the problem thoroughly and in a friendly manner, but the ' definite answer ' which I had been promised within a few days did not come. One of the officials in the Organisation department who knew how things stood hinted at an explanation: ' The Politbureau evidently doesn't want to decide anything without Stalin (who was on vacation in the South). He's the only one who can really see what's at issue.'

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A few months later, during another reorganisation of the Eastern department, Raskolnikov was removed. In the following years he busied himself in the literary and cultural field and later returned to the diplomatic service, first as representative in Estonia and after that as ambassador in Denmark. In the inner party discussion Raskolnikov remained, publicly at least, passive. Of course, from the end of the 1920s it ceased to be a discussion in the proper meaning of the word. Like hundreds of other party members who before the war and in the revolution and the civil war had played an important role, Raskolnikov could by then do no more than approve of the prescribed resolutions and do his best punctually to carry out the instructions which he received from the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. I am convinced that even in private conversation he avoided saying anything which could have given cause for suspicion that he maintained any connection with the opposition or thought along critical lines. He belonged, however, to Lenin's 'Old Guard', and during the final phase of the purges, towards the end of 1938, when he was ambassador in Bulgaria, his name was certainly on the NKVD list.

W. During the thirties you yourself were in Stalin's prisons and labour camps. Did you learn anything about Raskolnikov's fate?

P. In 1939, in the labour camp, I met a man called Ostrovsky who until a few months before had been the Soviet ambassador in Rumania. Ostrovsky was an old Bolshevik, a friend of Voroshilov's since the civil war, and always a faithful supporter of the Stalin line. He was suddenly recalled to Moscow and arrested immediately on his arrival. He was horribly tortured and then sentenced to twenty years in a labour camp. Ostrovsky told me of a large number of other Soviet diplomats who had been liquidated, and he also mentioned Raskolnikov's name among those who had been charged with treason. He had, however, heard a rumour that Raskolnikov had refused to return when he was recalled from Bulgaria.

W. Did you know anything of the 'Open Letter to Stalin' which Raskolnikov published abroad on the eve of the second world war?

P. I heard about it only many years later. All one knew in the Soviet Union was that Raskolinkov as a *nevosvrashchenets* (one who did not return) was declared an enemy of the people and a traitor to his country. Now, a quarter of a century later, *Izvestiya* praises what he did at the time. 'But he did not surrender', *Izvestiya* writes; 'in the hard and complicated conditions of life abroad he waged the struggle against Stalin's personality cult. He published a declaration "How they made me an enemy of the people", in which he defended not only himself but also the other innocent comrades who were victimised.'

W. But they did not publish his 'open letter'?

P. No. It appeared for the first time in Kerensky's weekly in Paris on 17 August 1939, exactly two weeks before the outbreak of war, and was later re-published in many American and European journals and newspapers. It went like this:

'Stalin, you have declared me an outlaw. By this step you have given me the same rights—or more precisely the same absence of rights

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—as all Soviet citizens who under your rule have been turned into outlaws. I answer you with complete reciprocity. I return to you the entrance ticket into " the country of socialism " which you have constructed and break with your regime. Your " socialism ", which finds room for all who helped to create it only behind prison walls, is as remote from real socialism as is the arbitrariness of your personal dictatorship from the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . . You have done everything to discredit Soviet democracy just as you have discredited socialism. Instead of carrying out the Constitution, you suppressed the growing discontent with force and terror. . . . You began by suppressing the former Trotskyites and the followers of Zinoviev and Bukharin, you continued with the liquidation of all the old Bolsheviks; finally you destroyed the party and non-party cadres who grew up during the civil war and who carried all the burdens of the five-year plans on their backs, and from there you went on to organise the liquidation of the Komsomol. You pretend to fight " against Trotskyite-Bukharinite spies ". But it is not only since yesterday that you hold power. No single individual could insinuate himself into a post of responsibility without your permission. Who put the so-called " enemies of the people " into their posts of responsibility? Joseph Stalin. Who planted the so-called wreckers into every crevice of the Soviet party and state apparatus? Joseph Stalin. With the aid of filthy forgeries you staged trials whose preposterous accusations surpass those you learnt about in your Seminary of the medieval witch trials. . . . You have slandered, dishonoured, and killed the men who for years fought shoulder to shoulder with Lenin—Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Rykov, and others of whose innocence you were fully aware. Before their death you compelled them to confess to crimes which they had never committed and to smear themselves from top to toe with dung. And where are the heroes of the October revolution? Where is the Old Guard? They are no longer alive. You murdered them, Stalin. . . . On the eve of the war you deprived the Army and the Red Fleet of its leaders. At the moment of the most acute danger of war you continue to liquidate the leaders of the army and the middle and lower rank commanders. . . .'

And here is the passage with which Fedor Fedorovich Raskolnikov ends his ' Open Letter to Stalin ':

' The working class has borne with selfless heroism all the burdens of heavy labour, of undernourishment, of famine, starvation wages, appalling housing, and the absence of the most essential goods. The working class believed that you would lead it to socialism, but you have betrayed it. The working class believed that with the victory of socialism in our country the dreams of all the world's most brilliant minds of the great brotherhood of men would come true and that everyone would be able to live in happiness and ease. You have destroyed even that hope. You declared that the construction of socialism is completed. And in whispers the workers are now asking one another: " If this is socialism, what, Comrades, did we fight for?" You deprived the kolkhoz peasants of every incentive to work. You took away their little plots of land so as to make them work in the kolkhoz fields. . . . Hypocritically you call the intelligentsia the salt of the earth, but you deprive the writer, the scientist, and the artist of even the minimum of freedom. You forced

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art into a straitjacket in which it suffocates, sickens, and perishes. . . . You brutally liquidate talented Russian writers who arouse your suspicion. You introduced—exactly like Hitler—the medieval practice of burning books. You deprived the Soviet scholars—especially those concerned with the humanities and social sciences—of that minimum of free scientific communication that is indispensable for any kind of creative work. Arrogant ignoramuses succeed by intrigues, petty quarrels, and slander in preventing true scholars from carrying on with their work at the universities, the laboratories, and institutes. No field, no small corner is left where they can quietly get on with their tasks. . . . You know the rarity value of educated and experienced diplomats; yet you enticed nearly all Soviet diplomats, one after the other, to Moscow and murdered them. You have liquidated the entire staff of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. . . . What determines your policy both at home and abroad is not love of the homeland, which you don't feel, but a zoological fear for your own power. Your unprincipled dictatorship blocks the advance of our country. . . . Like all Soviet patriots I carried on my work, shutting my eyes to much that went on. It was hard for me to make the final break—not with you and your doomed regime—but with the remnants of Lenin's party in which I served for nearly thirty years and which you annihilated in three years. It hurt to lose my homeland. . . . Endless is the list of your crimes; endless the roll-call of your victims. Sooner or later the Soviet people will put you in the dock, indicting you as a traitor to socialism and the revolution, as a superwrecker, as the true enemy of the people, as the organiser of famine and of the falsification of history.'

W. What kind of echo did this 'Open Letter' have in 1939, and what do you know about Raskolnikov's death?

P. The outbreak of war almost immediately after the publication of this letter no doubt accounted for the fact that it was not sufficiently appreciated at the time. Nevertheless, even today, in 1964, Raskolnikov's letter remains a document of lasting significance.

Raskolnikov died in Paris shortly after the outbreak of the war, on 12 September 1939. His 'Open Letter to Stalin' was in a sense the sum total of his experiences, his testament to the generations to come.

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THE STRANGE CASE OF ANNA LOUISE STRONG

Philip Jaffe

FOR nearly forty years, the life of Anna Louise Strong has been closely intertwined with the communist revolution in China. Now in her eighties and a resident of the Chinese People's Republic, she was at one time the centre of a violent ideological storm in the communist world, a storm that led her to a cell in the Lubyanka and Michael Borodin to his liquidation. I knew her well for about seventeen years, from 1940 to 1957. She drove herself and others with a sort of neurotic energy coupled with a quick and hot temper that made even her best friends uneasy in her presence. With me, however, she was more gentle than with others, perhaps because I could supply her with material, advice, and a medium for her China articles.

Her ancestors on both sides arrived in America in 1630, John Strong settling in Connecticut and the Tracys, Lords and Russells moving westward. Lizzie Lord, her grandmother's sister, married President Harrison and lived in the White House. Miss Strong's mother, a student at Oberlin College, was one of the first women to receive a college education. Her father, Dr Sydney Strong, was a minister who embraced Darwinism. In Seattle, Washington, he was pastor of the Queen Anne Congregational Church. And it was in Seattle that chance brought Anna Louise into the turbulence of the first general strike in the United States—a strike that lasted five days from 6 to 11 February 1919.

Her presence in Seattle during the general strike, especially as staff writer for both the Seattle *Daily Call* and the *Union Record* as well as correspondent for the N.Y. *Evening Post* and the *Survey*, was a decisive turning point in the life of Anna Louise Strong.

Beginning with a sort of Christian-Social worker type of humanitarianism,[1] she developed into a militant pacifist during the first World War, and then drifted into an emotional socialism—and the emotionalism has remained with her to this day. Although a prolific writer and lecturer, especially on Russia and China, she never really understood either socialism or Marxism. She was not and still is not fully at home with complex political problems. Her answers to searching questions are either emotional or naive or both. A case in point is a letter I received from her from California dated 25 August 1950 in response to a

1 After graduating from Oberlin College, she took post-graduate work at the University of Chicago. Her doctorate thesis was ' Consideration of Prayer from the Standpoint of Social Psychology ', published by the University of Chicago Press in 1909 as *The Psychology of Prayer*. This subject matter was not surprising in the light of such other titles as *Bible Hero Classics in Words of the Scripture* (1908); *Boys and Girls in the Bible* (1911); and *Biographical Studies in the Bible* (1912).

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correspondence on the matter of the Korean War. She writes: 'The questions you pose are indeed cryptic and arouse thinking. I wish I could have a long chat. . . . You, of course, start from the other end: not the WHY of America's action but the WHY for the S.U. I confess that I had rather naively been letting myself assume that the S.U. did not start this business, at least not intentionally. That either the North Koreans jumped the gun, or that the S.U. thought the U.S.A. would not fight for South Korea, at any rate not so fast.' Her self-confessed naïveté, however, was only a temporary aberration. She very soon returned to the official line, and for a period of months poured out a mass of propaganda glorifying North Korea.

Handsome, statuesque, bright and blue eyed, pink cheeked even in her late sixties, she was a dynamo of energy endlessly chasing after revolutions and civil wars in Russia, China, and even Mexico and Spain. It all began with a chance luncheon in Seattle in 1920 with Lincoln Steffens, who had just returned from Moscow. Inspired by his conversation, she was soon off to Poland for the Friends Service Committee and from there wangled her way into Russia in 1921. There she saw the Russian famine at first hand, and a four-month bout of typhus did not help to make this first visit a cheerful one. Yet, despite this unhappy beginning, Anna Louise Strong began a long association with Soviet Russia that made the title of her autobiography, *I Change Worlds*, a very fitting one.

For a time she was correspondent in Moscow, first for Hearst's International News Service and later for Hearst's *International Magazine*, under the editorship of Norman Hapgood. She also attended the fourth Communist International congress in 1922, and in December of the same year was an American representative at the second congress of the Red Trade Union International.

IT was in the autumn of 1925 that she made her first visit to China on the way from Moscow to Vancouver via the Trans-Siberian Railway. In Peking she met Fanny Borodin and learned that the latter's husband, Michael, was in China as 'adviser' to the Nationalist Government. With Mrs Borodin's help, Anna Louise arrived in Canton in the midst of the famous six-month general strike. Although her stay in Canton lasted only four days, it was long enough for her to deliver a lecture on Russia to 1,500 women.

In May 1927 she was back in China; from Shanghai she went directly to Hankow, the seat of the left wing of the Kuomintang under Wang Ching-wei as well as Borodin's headquarters. When Borodin introduced Anna Louise to a leading Chinese, he said, probably unaware of how prophetic he was about China: 'Miss Strong is unlucky in her revolutions. She came too late for the one in Russia and now she is very much too soon for China.' For, in a little over a month after this introduction, after Wang Ching-wei had turned against the communists, she left hurriedly with Borodin and all the Russians for Moscow via

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Shensi, Mongolia, and the Trans-Siberian Railway—a trip described in detail in her book *China's Millions.*

During 1929 and most of 1930 she travelled throughout the USSR in the period of forced collectivisation of the peasants. She defended Stalin's 'abolish the kulaks as a class' thesis in a pamphlet that sold 250,000 copies. In her autobiography she wrote: 'The world's press carried the story that Stalin ordered the extermination of the kulaks. Stalin had merely analysed and authorised what farmhands were already instinctively doing.'

On 5 October 1930, there appeared the first issue of *Moscow News* which she organised, and with which she was associated throughout its shifting changes in format and frequency, until her arrest in 1949.

In 1932 Miss Strong met Stalin for the only time in her life. During an interview with him on this occasion, she criticised the character of *Moscow News* as it was then being edited by her superiors. Stalin agreed with her, and as a result the paper was reorganised with Michael Borodin as responsible editor. She was so deeply impressed by Stalin's skill in dealing with a problem and by his manner with his subordinates, that her awe and respect for him never left her. In 1942, for example, as a guest in my home in Roxbury, Connecticut, she wrote her book *The Soviets Expected It.* All was calm until she came to the chapter on Stalin. While typing this chapter, she talked the text out loud, typed, and wept copiously all at the same time.

She visited China again in 1938 during the brief united front period. On her next trip in 1940, flying from Moscow to Chungking, she received a mass of material from Chou En-lai on Kuomintang-Communist relations, some of which was published in *Amerasia* in March 1941. (All the original material is in my possession.)

It was early in 1946, after wandering restlessly from one country to another for more than a quarter of a century, that Miss Strong finally arrived in China, planning to spend the rest of her life there. After nine months of travelling throughout the 'liberated areas', she made her way to Yenan, and in this primitive nerve centre of Chinese communism she at once felt and was carried away by the two principal moods. One was that of confidence. The other one—it was one of the prime conversational subjects—was Maoism, or the conviction that Mao had found the political answers to the needs of Asia.

IT is a well-known fact that from 1936, when the 'Long March' had brought the communists to Shensi Province, to 1950, the Chinese received no economic or military aid from the USSR. There is also no doubt that Stalin had been aware of Mao Tse-tung's heretical thoughts for a long time, for from as far back as the early thirties these two had not been the warmest of ideological friends. Thus it need not have come as a surprise when Stalin refused in the Spring of 1947 to support or even approve the proposed Chinese communist full-scale counter-offensive against Chiang Kai-shek.

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Yet despite Moscow's failure over the years to provide help, and despite the fact that in the summer of 1946 Chiang's troops were at Yenan's doorstep, extreme confidence reigned in communist headquarters. Westerners who visited Shensi in those months could not but be struck by this self-assurance and defiance.

It was also at this time that Mao Tse-tung used the expression 'paper tiger' in describing both 'American imperialism' and Chiang Kai-shek (and more recently Khrushchev). The epithet appeared in an interview with Miss Strong in Yenan, which featured such now familiar expressions as 'The atomic bomb is a paper tiger. Terrible to look at but not so strong as it seems. All reactionaries are paper tigers . . .' [2]

Supreme confidence was also reflected in the interview Marshal Peng Teh-huai gave Miss Strong in February 1947, just one month before the fall of Yenan. 'If Chiang takes Yenan, it begins his downfall . . . If we keep on encircling and wiping out Chiang's divisions at the present rate, we shall be ready by autumn to go over to a general counter-offensive.' [3] In this Yenan atmosphere of confidence and conviction, Miss Strong had no difficulty at all in getting party leaders and theoreticians to discuss Maoism with her at great length.

The result of many discussions and direct interviews was a long article, 'The Thought of Mao Tse-tung', describing Mao's transformation of Marxism from a European to an Asiatic form. Her interview with Liu Shao-chi in Yenan, in which he described what he called 'Mao's inventions in Marxism', lasted an entire day. As more and more Chinese leaders read and discussed the article, it grew in length until it reached some 10,000 words. The final text was revised and approved by Liu Shao-chi, who then as now ranked just below Mao in the party. In a letter to me from Shanghai dated 11 March 1947, she wrote:

> This letter concerns a special article that I have just finished, after working at it on and off for two months. It is 'The Thought of Mao Tse-tung,' and it is the first time Chinese Marxism has been summarised, in English at least. I had several all day interviews with Yenan theoreticians on the subject; after the article was written, it was translated back into Chinese and corrected in great detail, with additions made, a lot of important people spending quite a bit of time. When the article was finally retyped in Shanghai, various people here got quite excited and wanted it published at once in pamphlet form in Hong Kong and also in other places in the Far East.

Miss Strong found it difficult to find a publisher in the USA for the article. In June 1947, at last, it made its appearance in *Amerasia*, a monthly magazine of which I was publisher and editor. Soon thereafter, it was reprinted in English in Chefoo by the Communist Party

[2] 'A World's Eye View from a Yenan Cave: An Interview with Mao Tse-tung', by Anna Louise Strong. *Amerasia*, April 1947, p. 126.

[3] Quoted in Foreword to the Indian edition of *Dawn Out of China*, by Anna Louise Strong (Bombay, 1948).

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of China. Not a word of it had been changed in this Chinese edition, and even the editorial note with which I prefaced Miss Strong's article was included.

The 10,000-word article is of course too long to quote here in any great detail. It is most rewarding for those particularly interested in the Sino-Soviet dispute. It deals with Mao Tse-tung's political writings and speeches from the middle twenties, through his 'New Democracy' of 1940, and through the entire period of the second World War. It quotes extensively from interviews, especially with Liu Shao-chi and Lu Ting-yi, and describes the many 'mistakes' made from 1927 on in China, both by 'left dogmatists' and 'right opportunists'.

A group identified as the dogmatists was particularly marked for severe criticism. 'Many of them had studied abroad, especially in Moscow, and had the prestige of being able to quote from Marx, Lenin, and Stalin in great detail. Their ignorance of the practical problems of China was catastrophic. . . . The leadership of the dogmatists cost us heavily.' The most important paragraph, however, is the following—an exact quotation from Liu Shao-chi:

> Mao Tse-tung's great accomplishment has been to change Marxism from a European to an Asiatic form. Marx and Lenin were Europeans; they wrote in European languages about European histories and problems, seldom discussing Asia or China. . . . Mao Tse-tung is Chinese; he analyses Chinese problems and guides the Chinese people in their struggle to victory. He uses Marxist-Leninist principles to explain Chinese history and the practical problems of China. He is the first that has succeeded in doing so. . . . He has created a Chinese or Asiatic form of Marxism. . . . There are similar [to China's] conditions in other lands of south-east Asia. The courses chosen by China will influence them all.

For a better understanding of the entire text of 'The Thought of Mao Tse-tung', the following excerpt from Miss Strong's letter to me is important:

> Now IF you publish, there are only one or two matters of policy which I refer to you. There are only two places where I did not entirely defer to suggestions from Yenan. These suggestions reached me after I reached Shanghai and there was no chance to discuss them. On page eleven of my manuscript (IF you get it) and again on page fourteen, I discussed the mistakes of the Li Li-san line and of the dogmatists who came back from Moscow. All of this was given to me in the interviews. However, when the manuscript was returned to me, the mention of Li Li-san was cut from page eleven, though it was left on page fourteen. [The original manuscript here mentioned with the crossed out phrase is in my possession.] The explanation was that since Li Li-san had repented his mistakes, they did not wish to attack him too much. I met this comment by removing some of the stronger adjectives and making my paragraph on page eleven rather factual. But I thought that the name 'Li Li-san line' has been used abroad, and to omit it makes

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> the sequence of 'leftist mistakes' more confusing. [In private conversation, Miss Strong told me that other names of 'dogmatists' like Po Ku, the German Li Teh, and even Wang Ming were deliberately omitted from the first draft. The letter continues:] Similarly the description of the 'dogmatists' and of their study in Moscow was given me in conversation and later the words 'studied in Moscow' were cut out. I think the reason for this was in order not to seem to criticise Moscow. However, other correspondents have already quoted leading communists as saying, in much stronger language than I used: 'The Moscow instructions and the people from Moscow almost annihilated the Chinese communists' (back in 1930–34, of course). Since this is already said abroad in unclear form, I thought it much better to say it in a form which would explain the prestige of 'foreign study', making 'Moscow' only part of the foreign study prestige. [In ink in the margin A.L.S. added the words 'I changed it some'.] I feel sure that if I had been able to have a conference, they would have agreed. I also think this is needed to show the independence and Chinese nature of the Chinese communists today.

In the conviction that she had written a significant and valuable Marxist study that called for the widest distribution, Miss Strong began, via Moscow, an 18-month tour of East Europe, an author in search of a publisher. She had already completed in Shanghai a 125,000-word book on China, into which was woven the material from 'The Thought of Mao Tse-tung'.

The over-riding importance of the material was not lost on the communists of East Europe and India. All the East European countries (as well as Berlin and Rome) save one accepted her book. The lone exception was Yugoslavia, which insisted on sending it to Moscow for approval. The Tito-Stalin break, of course, was yet to come. The Communist Party of India, then headed by P. C. Joshi, not only accepted the book, but published it in its entirety in February 1948, under the title *Dawn Out of China*, with a foreword written by Miss Strong in Prague in November 1947.

In the meantime, the Communist Party of the United States published (through a front organisation, the Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy) nearly half of it, under the title *Tomorrow's China*; its first edition of 20,000 copies appeared in December 1948. So great was the demand that within a month there was another printing of 20,000. However, the American edition bore the mark of a cautious editor. For Miss Strong's—and Liu Shao-chi's—key sentence about changing 'Marxism from a European to an Asiatic form' was substituted, without authorisation, the far less explosive 'Mao's great achievement has been the application of Marxist thinking to Chinese problems'. And the American communists could hardly attribute the alteration to ignorance for in June 1947 the CP, USA had ordered from *Amerasia* 2,000 reprints of Miss Strong's article.

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THROUGHOUT her entire stay in Europe in 1947 and 1948, Miss Strong was apparently not sufficiently aware of at least three major events in the communist world.

1. The formation of the Cominform in September 1947 in Warsaw, ostensibly against the West in general and the Marshall plan in particular, but also against right deviation, a euphemism, in my opinion, for the latest phase of Maoism.

2. The removal of P. C. Joshi as Secretary of the Indian Communist Party that can be traced to the speeches at the opening session of the Cominform. Zhdanov's very leftist speech in which he divided the world into two hostile and irreconcilable camps, Kardelj's speech in which he made no ideological distinction between large and small bourgeoisie, thereby opposing Mao's position in 'New Democracy', and the Soviet press criticism of Nehru as an imperialist lackey, all gave the Indian leftists sufficient support to replace Joshi by B. T. Ranadive in March 1948.

3. Ranadive's attack on the 'Maoist' Andhra Document of June 1948—a document which said in part: 'Our revolution in many respects differs from the classical Russian Revolution; and is to a great extent similar to that of the Chinese Revolution. . . . Mao, the leader of the historic Chinese liberation struggle, has formulated a theory of new democracy. This is a form of revolutionary struggle to advance towards socialism in colonies and semi-colonies. Mao advanced new democracy as distinct from the dictatorship of the proletariat.'[4]

Stalin, beyond doubt, had much to do with the foregoing events, for he had long been aware of the Yenan heresy, of which 'The Thought of Mao Tse-tung' was the printed expression. The decision to do something about it must have been reached early in 1949, soon after the Tito-Stalin break and when the Chinese communists obviously stood on the threshold of total victory over Chiang Kai-shek. Such a victory would clearly enhance the influence of Mao and his Asiatic form of Marxism, and present a serious challenge to the survival of a monolithic communist bloc and to Stalin as its leader. The counterblow devised by Moscow was worthy of a Machiavelli. It was decided to strike at the ideological rival in China by depicting his American political Boswell and the carrier of Mao's heresy as a 'capitalist spy'.

On 14 February 1949, after Miss Strong had spent four months of fruitless waiting in Moscow for an exit visa for China, the USSR announced her arrest. Anna Louise Strong was accused of 'espionage and subversive activity against the Soviet Union'. Once she was so branded, the woman—she was then close to 70—no longer had to be kept in Lubyanka. Five days after her arrest, with not a word of explanation, she was released and flown to Poland. From there she returned to the United States. All her papers were confiscated.

[4] Quoted from 'Struggle for People's Democracy and Socialism—Some Questions of Strategy and Tactics', in *Communist* (Bombay), June–July 1949.

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The effect was both immediate and predictable. The scheduled publication of her book in East European countries was cancelled. The second American edition was junked. The American *Daily Worker* joined in Moscow's attack on her as a spy. On 25 March 1949 it said: 'Miss Strong's defence against the charges of espionage preferred by Soviet authorities sounds very peculiar. She argues that she was just a journalist trying to get information about Soviet-Manchurian border conditions, and about transportation over that border. She asserts she kept on trying to get this information by what she admits were unofficial channels for months. The statement made by Soviet authorities when Miss Strong was arrested indicates, however, that the charges of espionage are based on long range activities.'

Almost overnight, the stunned and uncomprehending Miss Strong found herself a pariah throughout the communist world, with only a few persons daring to profess friendship for her. Her only consolation was the publication of a series of six articles by her in the New York *Herald-Tribune* (27 March–1 April 1949), as well as a book, *The Chinese Conquer China*, published later that year by Doubleday.

In the meantime, except for Yugoslavia's defection, communist Eastern Europe and India moved sharply to the left. In India the Communist Party, still under the leadership of Ranadive, attacked Mao Tse-tung in no uncertain terms in a 35,000-word article:

> We must state emphatically that the Communist Party of India has accepted Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin as the authoritative sources of Marxism. It has not discovered new sources of Marxism beyond these. . . . It is impermissible for communists to talk lightly about new discoveries, enrichment, because such claims have proved too often to be a thin cloak for revisionism (Tito, Browder, etc.). . . . It must be admitted that some of Mao's formulations are such that no communist party can accept them; they are in contradiction to the world understanding of the communist parties.[5]

And yet despite the many explosive movements in the communist world in 1947, 1948, and 1949, Anna Louise Strong never did find it in herself to offer a public explanation of the *real* reasons for her personal drama. The explanation she did offer was that she had stepped on the toes of some minor officials of the Soviet secret police by demanding permission to travel to Peking via Manchuria even though she had been told this was a secret route closed to her. She persisted with this explanation even after I pointed out to her that an International Women's Committee had at this very time reached Peking via this 'secret' route, and that some Chinese officials had at the same time come from Peking to Moscow via the same route.

However, Miss Strong was never comfortable with the explanation. When she delivered a lecture at Oberlin College in 1950, she requested that all the questions be submitted to her in writing. She was all but

[5] *Communist*, June–July 1949.

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speechless when she was asked this pointed but unrehearsed question: 'You've told us that your expulsion from the USSR was due to a "bonehead blunder of the Russian secret police", and you've told us that as a result of your expulsion the communist parties all over the world have broken off relations with you, ceased to publish your books, denied you entrance to their halls and so forth. Do you mean to suggest by this that a "bonehead blunder of the Russian secret police" determines world communist policy?' She declined to reply. Later, asked why she had not, she said, 'Because I couldn't. . . . It wasn't really fair of you to leave the prepared text, but I admit it was a good question . . .' [6]

Miss Strong in her naïvete felt so certain that her arrest was made without Stalin's knowledge that she sought Henry Wallace's intervention with Stalin on her behalf. I brought her to Mr. Wallace's home and was present at the interview. Of course, the visit proved to be in vain, for Mr Wallace obviously could not entertain such a request. Not until early in 1958, in a private interview in New York, did Miss Strong admit the possibility that her arrest might have been due to the need to destroy the reputation of a carrier of Mao's heresy and thus lessen the impact of Mao Tse-tung's thought on the communist world.

She further stated in this interview that when she first arrived in Moscow in October 1948, Michael Borodin expressed concern about her book and wanted to save her reputation in Russia. Yet she heard him saying over the telephone: 'but they are winning'. Presumably, Borodin was referring to the Chinese communist victories over Chiang Kai-shek, and therefore he may have implied that there was no reason for refusing to publish her book. She remembered, she said, that *Pravda* was playing down Chinese communist victories. And yet she insisted, so she said, that if the authorities had to 'edit' her book, she must see the editing. Her naïvete was not easy to fathom. Her inability to understand what her 'Thought of Mao Tse-tung' article and her books meant to Stalin was, however, not an aberration. It was simply an inability to grasp all the implications and ideological manoeuvres in a struggle for political power. She might have had a premonition of her future troubles in Moscow when, while still writing her book in Shanghai in 1947, she was obliged to wait more than three months for a transit visa through North Korea. Yet she just marched ahead as if what she considered important and right could not be denied.

THE 1958 interview also threw some new light on the fate of Michael Borodin. She said to the interviewer that she had recently heard that Borodin had been arrested. The *Soviet Historical Encyclopedia* (Moscow, 1962, Vol. 2, p. 623) states simply that Borodin died on 29 May 1951, that he was unjustly purged, and that therefore he had been posthumously rehabilitated. Peculiarly, the same biographical sketch

[6] 'Anna Louise Goes Home Again', by Paul Willen, *The Reporter* (New York), 7 April 1955.

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states that from the end of 1949 Borodin was editor-in-chief of *Moscow News*, despite the well-known fact that he had held this post since 1933. Regardless of this inexplicable error, it is most probable that Borodin's arrest occurred at the same time or soon after Miss Strong's, and that it was due in part at least to the role he played in urging the publication of her book.[7]

By 1950, Stalin had no choice but to accept Mao's military victories as a *fait accompli*. And it was therefore not a surprise when by the middle of 1950 the Indian Communist Party replaced Ranadive by C. R. Rao, the leader of the Andhra communists. Under Rao the CPI, in a 15,000-word article, wrote a fulsome apology to Mao Tse-tung. It opens with the following words:

> The Editorial Board of *Communist* unreservedly withdraws the entire [1949] criticism of Comrade Mao Tse-tung . . . [it] tenders its deeply felt apologies to Comrade Mao Tse-tung and to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. . . . This criticism was not only wrong and anti-Leninist, but also a base slander against the leader of the victorious Chinese Revolution. . . . It was not an isolated mistake. It was a necessary part of the Trotskyite—Titoite conceptions, which dominated the mind of the [previous] Editorial Board, of its effort to pursue left-opportunist policies.[8]

It was not, however, until 4 March 1955 that Anna Louise Strong was restored to Moscow's good graces. A special announcement from the Soviet Procurator General stated that further investigation had proved that the charges against her were 'without any grounds' and that the 'Beria clique' was responsible for the false accusations. And although she was not exonerated until two years after Stalin's death, and despite Khrushchev's famous attack on Stalin in February 1956, she published later that year a book in defence of Stalin under the title *The Stalin Era*. In this book she praised Stalin for his many achievements, with only an occasional backhanded recognition of some of his 'personal' crimes.

> Stalin is one of those who are judged by long history, the character of whose work grows clearer as it recedes from view. . . . Yet 'the cult of personality,' now blamed for all past evils, is a flaw in the worshipper no less than in the worshipped. . . . Looking back, one can see how the other leaders—Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin—lead towards destruction.

[7] After the completion of this article, Borodin's rehabilitation was at last given popular recognition in a Soviet newspaper. A memorial article in honour of the eightieth anniversary of his birth was written by Lt.-Gen. A. J. Cherepanov and published on 30 June 1964 in *Moskovskaya Pravda*. General Cherepanov, now retired, was a Soviet military adviser in China under Marshal Bluecher (using in China the pseudonym Galen) from 1924 to 1927. Marshal Bluecher was shot in the 1938 purge and rehabilitated in 1957. Since Borodin disappeared in 1949, it is almost certain that his arrest was connected with that of Miss Strong, which also occurred in February 1949.

[8] 'Statement of Editorial Board of *Communist* on Anti-Leninist Criticism of Comrade Mao Tse-tung', *Communist*, July–August 1950.

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In 1959, she returned to Peking, to be publicly welcomed by Mao as a true and valuable friend.[9] Now in her eighties, she still pours out a stream of articles and pamphlets in praise of Chinese communism and its leaders. The complex and momentous story of Moscow's struggle with Chinese communism can hardly be complete without a chapter on the strange case of Anna Louise Strong.

[9] She wrote about her travels, and the lessons she drew from them, in *Letter from China* (26 July 1963), which she publishes in Peking. The article was reprinted in *Peking Review* (20 September 1963).

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PALMIRO TOGLIATTI

Aldo Garosci

IT is not just today that Palmiro Togliatti's personality seems on occasion to be beyond comprehension. In a long article on the 'History of the Turin Communists' a young ideologist who was very close to them, Piero Gobetti, wrote in 1922: 'Togliatti has not yet held any responsible post in directing action. He is drawn into politics by his careful preparation, but he is possessed of a restlessness which looks like cynicism, but is really indecision. . . .' When Gobetti came back to the same theme two years later, he confirmed his earlier judgment in almost the same words—by then Togliatti had already held 'responsible posts'—and Gobetti ended by suspending 'any objective judgment'.[1]

Very many years later, after a long political career, the cynicism rather naturally seems to stand out, compared with the indecision. But is this so? A glance at Togliatti's early years may possibly throw some light upon all this.

Togliatti was born in Genoa on 26 March 1893, of a modest family of Piedmontese civil servants. His mind was formed in Turin, whither he went at eighteen as the holder of a scholarship offered by the Provincial College, one of the few bursaries which enabled young people from the old Sardinian States to enter Turin University without expense for the family.[2] He was not just a bright young scholar. There was a small group of contemporaries, also exceptionally intelligent, also mostly from the provinces, who joined the Socialist party and developed their ideas in party propaganda and in close contact with the Turin factory workers. A passion for social studies or just the novelty of the situation, of finding himself in a fairly closed bourgeois urban society, or both, drew the young Togliatti into this group. It included Tasca, Gramsci, and Terracini, who were later to found the review *Ordine Nuovo* and to become the intellectual and moral nucleus of the Italian Communist Party. Gramsci was without doubt the most original of the three and the most outstanding as a political personality.

Curiously enough, there is no written work of Togliatti of a purely theoretical kind during this period, in which Gramsci was working out his theories. Unlike Gramsci, Togliatti's socialism was emotional, as can be seen from his translations of Martinet's revolutionary poems for *Ordine Nuovo*. Nevertheless, this emotionalism was allied to a caustic commonsense, the product of a native Genoese wit combined with a certain aggressive sense of superiority. While Gramsci was rapidly gaining experience as an active socialist worker, even if only on a district level, Togliatti remained fairly obscure.

1 P. Gobetti, *Scritti Politici* (Turin, 1960), pp. 284, 1005.

2 He came second in an examination in which Gramsci came sixth, and Vincenti, a professor of German literature who died recently, came first.

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The same thing happened in the first world war. The little group of young socialists in Turin favoured Italy's intervention in the war because they had been brought up in a spirit of idealistic nationalism, and because of the tradition of action in the democratic left. The group were left, because all the young were left and the leader of the left was Benito Mussolini who went over to the cause of Italy's entry into the war. Tasca alone was definitely in favour of neutrality, and he was slightly older and of positivist schooling. Gramsci at first leaned towards entry into the war. He had to stay in Turin, being a cripple, and very soon, in his capacity as a socialist journalist, he made himself the interpreter of the neutralism and anti-war sentiments of the working masses in the city, no less enthusiastically and with the same fervour as he had used previously on the other side. Togliatti went to the front and then rejoined the party and re-entered political life, virtually unnoticed. At the end of the war his hopes were still centered on what *President Wilson might achieve and on the League of Nations.*[3]

To sum up this pre-historical period of Togliatti's political life, we find that he had a definite emotional orientation, in which democratic and socialist elements were combined, and at the same time showed a caustic talent in his literary work. Politically, he was still as Gobetti found him in 1922, unemployed 'in any responsible post directing action', an idealistic and shrewd 'chronicler'. When the Italian Communist Party was founded in 1921, Togliatti was not a member of its Executive nor indeed of its central committee. He only became a member of the latter at the Rome congress in March 1922. His journalistic talents were used as the chief editor of *Communista,* the main organ of the party, and he had a nasty moment in October of that year, when fascists invaded the paper's premises. His whole career developed after the advent of fascism, in the underground inside Italy or abroad, as the boss of the party rather than as fighter in one or other of its currents.

In March 1923, when the fascist regime was exercising power arbitrarily but had not yet become totalitarian, almost the entire executive committee of the Communist party was arrested. Gramsci then told Zinoviev (with whom he was working in Moscow) that Togliatti was the man who might well be able to hold the party together as its secretary, while the others were in prison. So he became its secretary until he too was arrested in September 1923. Along with all the other communist leaders he was released in December. He remained among the leaders under Gramsci, who had been elected to Parliament and returned from abroad in 1924. Moscow wanted men like Gramsci and Togliatti at the head of the Italian party, men who would support the tactics of a united proletarian front with the socialists, rather than the men of the left who were in a majority and would have nothing to do with the 'maximalist' socialists. For the leftists these socialists had

[3] Tasca in conversation with the author.

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been a disaster for the Italian proletariat. So, at the fifth congress of the International in Moscow in June 1924, as Gramsci's lieutenant, Togliatti appeared as one of the most prominent among the new central committee of the Italian Communist Party appointed at the Congress. Togliatti also became a member of the Executive of the International, as Stalin did just then. With his own victory and that of his leader Gramsci confirmed at the secret congress of the Italian CP held in Lyons, Togliatti returned to Moscow, where in February 1926 he opposed the views of the left Italian communist leader Bordiga. Bordiga complained of the new attack on the left. Togliatti held that the best way for the Italian party to tackle its difficulties was to collaborate ever more closely with the Russian communists.

It was Togliatti's position in the International which both saved him physically—since he was in Moscow—and at the same time made him the leader of the Italian CP, for in November 1926, after an alleged attempt on Mussolini's life, all the leading persons in the Italian party, including Gramsci, were arrested; those who survived did not recover their freedom again until the fall of the fascist regime. Togliatti was in Russia attending the seventh plenum of the Comintern Executive. He was there as representative of the Italian CP not only because he was the sole leader available to reorganise the party, but also because he had come to realise that the prospects for any communist were strictly dependent upon his support of the winning side among the warring factions inside the Russian Bolshevik Party.

WHAT was the function and what were the tactics of Togliatti in his double role as head of an Italian party forced into the position of a nucleus of conspirators, and as one of the active directors of the Communist International? He was among the first to grasp that the struggle inside Russia was not governed by any laws of solidarity, but was simply a struggle for power with no holds barred, and that if the party was to be saved it was necessary to conform and submit to the winning faction. He had said as much clearly when, in a letter to Gramsci when the 'troika' broke down, he wrote that he hoped 'that the majority in the [Russian] central committee would not have everything its own way in the struggle'.[4] On occasion he would press for more legal procedures, but he was prepared for any compromise which would not put the future strength of the party inside Italy into jeopardy. 'We cannot have a crisis in our struggle against fascism simply because the Russians are fighting among themselves' seems to have been his general attitude.[5] With this end in view he required submission to Moscow from every wing of the Italian CP.

By and large his aim of keeping the party together was achieved.

4 The letters were first mentioned in Bellini and Galli's *History of the Italian Communist Party* (Milan, 1953). The correspondence is examined in *Rinascita* (Rome), 18 June 1964.

5 Cf. Silone's contribution to *The God That Failed.*

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Whether in the underground in Italy or in its groups in exile, the Italian CP was to have the fewest purges and expulsions. The leader of the left, Bordiga, had deliberately put himself outside the pale and was expelled in 1929. In the same year Angelo Tasca was expelled, although he was not only on the Executive Committee of the International, but had also been elected to serve on its secretariat. In this capacity Tasca, who had always been on the right wing of his party, broke with Stalin over the liquidation of the kulaks and so fell into disgrace. Togliatti supported the condemnation of Bukharin as he had supported that of Zinoviev. Three members of the political bureau of the Italian CP who refused to adopt the Moscow thesis about the 'maturity' of the revolutionary masses, a thesis which implied a conspiratorial struggle in Italy against the fascist regime, were also expelled. That struggle was to prove extremely costly. Ignazio Silone, who had held leading positions in the party, was expelled at the same time. But between 1930 and 1951, when the two deputies Cucchi and Magnani were expelled, the Italian CP managed to avoid any serious public crisis among its leaders, which was exceptional among communist parties in exile.

Of course, all this was achieved at a price. Togliatti's part in the condemnation of Bela Kun and of the Polish Communist Party, his silence at the disappearance of a good number of Italian communists living in Russia in the great Soviet purges,[6] prove that no communist leader can survive periods of terror without having blood on his hands. There is no evidence that Togliatti actively sought out such occasions.

His part in the Spanish Civil War is more controversial; he was the Third International's delegate to the Spanish CP during the POUM trial, the conflict in Catalonia, and other notorious communist activities. When Jesus Hernandez accused him of specific responsibility, Togliatti gave factual evidence of his absence from Spain on the dates mentioned by Hernandez,[7] but there can be no doubt that in so far as any single man influenced the general tactics by which the Spanish CP came to control most of Spanish Republican policy, Togliatti was far more than a mere agent in the application of those tactics. More especially the statement that the Spanish CP was fighting for a 'new type of democracy', when it had originally stated that it was simply fighting under the banner of the 'popular front' in defence of parliamentary institutions and against fascism, bears the mark of Italian origin, the Togliatti touch. This early pattern of the more recent 'popular democracy' consisted in taking the reins of the anti-fascist struggle and in capturing power, not in the name of the proletarian revolution, as Lenin had done, but in the name of a democracy with the external traditional trappings, but of a 'new type', that is, in fact, with a very different content.

If these theories and tactics can in the main be ascribed to Stalin,

[6] Cf. R. Mieli, *Togliatti, 1937* (Milan, 1964); Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War.*
[7] A. Garosci, M. Einaudi and J. M. Domenach, *Communism in Western Europe* (Cornell University Press, 1951), p. 198.

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the evidence provided in some of the typical early publications of the Italian left suggests that more than their mere interpretation was due to Togliatti. This would explain the unusual success of this political leader during the Stalin period.

THE Italian CP had providentially been spared the difficulties arising out of acceptance and apologia for the Hitler-Stalin Pact. The party accepted the pact of course, but the circumstances of political life in France, where its main activities took place, forbade any public manifestation of this acceptance. In Italy itself old and new party members (among them the old Terracini, in prison) disapproved the pact, but their expulsion and later readmission to the party took place underground, so that the anti-fascist image of the party was not damaged.

The underground and partisan activities of the party in Italy during the war were wholly directed and controlled by party militants who, from exile in France, had crossed into Italy, or by those who had been freed from prison within the country. Togliatti's personal safety in this phase of the underground was not to be put at risk, so he stayed in Russia. He arrived in Naples, newly liberated by British and American forces, on 27 March 1944, and immediately imposed a quite new line on the Italian CP.

Until then the party, which had been extremely active both in German-occupied and in liberated Italy, and had worked in close association with all other anti-fascist parties, had presented an extremely radical image of itself. Together with the socialist and republican parties it stood for the dismissal of the King and Marshal Badoglio as commanders of the anti-fascist war. Togliatti accepted the King and Badoglio, thereby being more accommodating than even the right wing of the liberals. This he continued to do on many occasions and for as long as the CP formed part of the Government coalition. When Parri's left-centre coalition Government fell, Togliatti favoured the advent of de Gasperi and advocated the 'collaboration of the three mass parties' (communists, socialists, and catholics). When the new Italian Constitution came to be written into the Statute Book, he welcomed the privileges accorded to the Roman Church as set forth in Article 7.

It is easy to see how Togliatti's behaviour after his return to Italy repeats the pattern of his conduct in the Spanish Civil War, as well as in regard to Rumania. The main rivals of the communist party who must be beaten are always the other movements on the political left: socialists must be neutralised by means of unity-of-action pacts; outworn institutions must be supported (moderate republicans in office in Spain even if the entire social structure has collapsed; the King supported in Rumania even after the arrival of the Red Army in 1944). The plan is to establish an exclusive system of alliances, stretching far to the right. Meanwhile, on the left, everything has been done to eliminate any possible alternative to the communist policy. Support which might be mobilised for the right is neutralised by 'anti-fascist' alliances, which deny to the conservatives

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any resolutely anti-communist position—for this can be quickly stamped as 'fascist'. The Italian pattern is the same, but it did not lead to the capture of power.

Why not? To begin with, something in the plan failed to work. The aim of neutralising the non-communist left was not achieved while the struggle was being waged, whereas the monarchy was swept away. Moreover, the alliance with the Catholics, as numbers went, strengthened the Catholics rather than the communists, so that the Christian Democrats in Parliament became the operative party in the situation, and could dismiss the communists as soon as they had provided the necessary support to get the Constitution through; they were dropped when the international situation provided the opportunity.

Possibly the fundamental obstacle to success was due to Togliatti himself. He had done wonders in building up a party that was ready to 'control' every aspect of Italian life, merely waiting for the day when it could itself become the State, on the assumption that the Government would collapse, given some slight external pressure. But it was not a party made for struggle, either internal or external.

Everything was arranged so that the little army of revolutionary fighters would be turned into generals, colonels, captains, and sergeants commanding organised masses; no one was to be left out; everybody, either at their place of work or wherever they were, was to be reached through the greatest possible number of mass organisations. Here, for instance, is how Togliatti saw the organisation of the housewives of Italy:

> A party that is truly a people's party, is present wherever the people meet and are active, in the factories, fields, offices, ships, trade unions, and co-operatives. But the people are first of all at home, where the women are, and the women are the ones who set the tone of family life. As long as we do not succeed in establishing ourselves in the homes, in the markets, wherever the life of most people goes on in its elementary forms, we shall not be able to say that we have succeeded in establishing a people's party.

What was lacking for the success of this plan was the resolve to stake everything on victory, the decision to go through a period of revolutionary chaos, of rivalry with other revolutionary solutions, and even, if necessary, international conflict. But neither Stalin nor Togliatti wanted this. Togliatti's indecision and Stalin's caution and his wish that nothing should happen outside his immediate control, coincided. Togliatti always boasted that he had avoided the 'Greek predicament': direct conflict with Allied forces and all the train of reactions which such a conflict brings. This was true. But a revolutionary leader who prides himself, with some reason, on controlling directly (or indirectly through alliances) almost the entire population of working people, does not usually behave as though victory will come from outside. (The majority vote which the Christian-Democratic Party gained certainly included

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more women's votes and more votes in areas less urban than those where the socialists and communists had their votes.)

But Togliatti, as we have seen, rose to leadership of his party not in a direct struggle for power, but first as Gramsci's second-in-command and then as the trusted man of the ruling group in Russia. He quite rightly believed that no communist leader, before coming to power, could be popular and strong by virtue of his personal qualities, but only by virtue of the authority delegated to him as an interpreter of the 'great revolution' (and he might have added even after coming to power, until Tito proved the contrary). When Togliatti arrived in Italy in 1944 he was virtually unknown to the masses. His activities in Spain had been secret. His articles had been signed 'Ercoli'; his talks on the wireless were given under the name of 'Mario Correnti'. A few months later, by the time Rome was liberated, he already had the most fanatical following of any leader, although he had no flair for publicity or for personal relations comparable to those enjoyed by other leaders of the left like Nenni or Parri.

From then onward what he did was to preserve this magic particle of charismatic power lent him by the grace of Lenin and Stalin, and at the same time to increase his own power and popularity as much as possible inside the communist movement, while organising it on the widest and most efficient basis. Both aims were vital for him: without Stalin's approval his power could easily have been withdrawn, while a good, efficient, and large Italian party was a good card to play with the Russians. They knew that such a party inside hostile territory is always a factor in international affairs.

But if and when the two aims came into conflict, Togliatti pursued only the first. That was his prime necessity.

There are plenty of instances to illustrate this. Togliatti's party held somewhat unyielding nationalistic views about Italy's frontiers during the war. It was quite firm about the Brenner frontier with Austria. On the other hand, over Trieste, it gravely compromised its position in the country by favouring Tito's claims in obedience to Russian directives. Of course in 1949 it rallied solidly against Tito the heretic.

More significant is the fact that Togliatti was inclined to accept the Marshall Plan on the eve of the Italian general election in 1948, but then, on Russian orders, launched a violent campaign against the Plan. The general election of 1948 was in fact the most typical of all the communist party's attempts to achieve power by legal means. There was a fair likelihood of gaining power in the election; against this had to be set the indispensable support of Stalin. Togliatti chose the latter. Nor was the choice without advantage. Within the strictest conformity to Stalinism, Togliatti maintained mastery of the largest communist apparatus outside the USSR, while avoiding the excesses of Soviet cultural controls (always, of course, when culture involved no specific political problem), and exercising for a long time in Italy a function as close to that of 'Her Majesty's Opposition' as the leader of a subversive movement ever can.

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There were certain positions he had to abandon. From organisations which were to govern the housewife, at home and in the market, he has descended to one overall organisation which no longer wields a monopoly even if it is probably still a majority organisation inside the trade unions. The old united-front organisations have been dissolved or have been reduced to no more than a communist and fellow-travelling membership. The party has more literary veterans than young theoreticians in its ranks. But it must be remembered that the Italian CP has weathered seventeen years in opposition, as well as the death of Stalin and destalinisation, with a minimal loss of supporters (for instance, the drop in its vote over the repression in Hungary was recouped after the first sputnik was launched).

Moreover there is no reason to expect the party to change its character, unless there were to be some deep crisis or upheaval. Togliatti's flexibility in following the turns in Russian policy without impairing the Soviet myth (for example in admitting past errors and weaknessess but attributing them to the 'contradictions' in Russian society, an explanation which the Russians do not accept); his tolerance of divergent opinions inside the party, so long as they do not threaten to damage the party image (by which the habits of the Stalin period are simply sustained); his readiness to welcome every opportunity of declaring the party's cultural independence (the only thing he really cares about); all this does not prevent him from seeing his own position and that of his party as being closely bound to the continuing myth of the uniqueness, however diverse its manifestations, of the communist revolution. He has no inclination for conferences and condemnations, not because he really has adopted any idea of the party's autonomy—the 'Italian road to socialism' merely implies permission to pursue very much the same course as hitherto—but because what matters to him is to retain and enjoy the authority vested in him. He is not a demagogue by nature or instinct, and to have to re-establish his position by conflicts within the party carried out in full view of the masses would be a very dubious undertaking.

In Italy, as in the USSR, the decision to change the quality of the communist party is out of reach of the surviving descendants of Stalinism.

(*Professor Garosci's article was completed shortly before Signor Togliatti's death in the Crimea last August.*)

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THE COMING STORM

The Austro-Hungarian Embassy on Russia's Internal Crisis, 1902-06 *

A. Ascher

ALTHOUGH historians have for a long time debated whether a country's foreign policy determines the course of its internal development or vice versa, European diplomats, ever since the emergence of modern diplomacy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, have acted on the assumption that there is an interrelationship between the two, and the most astute emissaries have always devoted considerable time to studying domestic trends in the countries to which they were assigned. Until recently ambassadors were generally drawn from the nobility and could gain access to the highest social circles; the information they collected from such sources was often remarkably accurate and revealing.

That this was still true, to some extent, early in the twentieth century is demonstrated by the reports from the Austro-Hungarian Embassy in St. Petersburg reproduced in translation below. Most of the dispatches dealt, of course, with foreign political matters, but periodically—and especially during times of domestic stress—they focussed on Russian internal developments. The documents presented here are all concerned with the turbulent events immediately preceding and following the Revolution of 1905. In addition to once again showing the depth of disaffection vis-à-vis the prevailing order in tsarist Russia, they reveal a striking contrast between the ambassador's realistic assessment of the conditions that produced the outburst and his failure to grasp the driving forces behind the revolutionary upheaval.

In view of his political outlook and personal prejudices, this is perhaps not surprising. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Russia from 1899 to 1906, Aloys Lexa von Aehrenthal (1854–1912), was born into an aristocratic family dedicated to state service. In 1877, soon after completing his university education, Aehrenthal entered the diplomatic corps and spent several years in Russia as a minor official in the embassy. He made every effort to acquaint himself with conditions in Russia, mastered the language, studied the country's history and economy, and made a wide circle of friends. He was a firm believer in monarchy and professed a relatively simple foreign policy: he wanted the Austro-Hungarian Empire to play an independent and major role in world affairs, he favoured close relations with the German Empire, and, at least until 1908, he thought it advisable for his country to reach an understanding

* I should like to express my appreciation to the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, for permission to publish these ambassadorial reports. I should also like to express my gratitude to the Rockefeller Foundation, whose grant made it possible for me to devote the current year to research in Europe.

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with Russia, even if this involved some sacrifice. Essentially, then, he hoped for a sort of revival of the Three Emperors' League of the early 1870s, the purpose of which had been to bolster the monarchical idea. Today Aehrenthal is best known for his work as Foreign Minister from 1906 to 1912, during which time his annexation of Bosnia-Hercegovina strained the relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia.

The backwardness, corruption, and inefficiency of Russia's social and political order appalled Aehrenthal, even though he was a political conservative. He feared that unless reforms were instituted from above—moderate ones, to be sure—the entire system would collapse. His grasp of the situation in Russia, though certainly not complete, was basically sound, and his account of the opinions of prominent people and of striking incidents adds a touch of drama to a story that is now generally known. Since his warnings came from a man well disposed towards the tsarist autocracy, the political blindness of the old regime seems all the more incredible.

In his early reports Aehrenthal emphasised the shortcomings of the prevailing order and warned his government of impending disaster. But as the revolutionary movement began to take the initiative, a turn of events he deplored, his judgment became less incisive and reliable. To some degree this is already evident in his reports late in 1904. And his dispatches on the major events of the Revolution of 1905, not given here, are filled with interesting facts and unsubstantiated assertions. He claimed, for instance, that Father Gapon's peaceful procession on 9 January 1905—known as 'bloody Sunday'—was directed against the person of the tsar and represented a threat to the state. A 'test of strength' between the demonstrators and the government was inevitable and would serve to forestall similar 'acts of insolence' in other cities. He also believed that the marchers had provoked the authorities by plundering and by attempting to disarm the soldiers. Aehrenthal described Witte, an enlightened and realistic conservative, as bent upon riding the revolutionary tide to a position of the greatest political power in Russia. He even gave credence to the rumour that Witte had agreed with the leaders of Russian Social-Democracy to grant a constitution if the Social-Democrats would maintain order. By 1906, as the last two documents show, the ambassador had adopted a conspiratorial explanation of the Revolution. He had persuaded himself that the Jews, and to a lesser extent the press, were responsible for the revolutionary disturbances. He interpreted the pogroms as little more than a popular outburst against those responsible for the excesses of 1905. The government, in his view, had little to do with them.

It is ironic that during the early stages of the first series of massive pogroms in 1881 the tsarist autocracy actually opposed them and a number of revolutionaries regarded them with favour. Both were moved by the same consideration: they believed that these disorders signified the start of the social revolution. But when it became evident that the pogroms diverted people from a genuinely revolutionary course by

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allowing them to vent their hostility on a defenceless minority, the government's attitude changed to one of tolerance, if not to one of encouragement. This change was especially noticeable during the wave of pogroms in 1905 and 1906. Aehrenthal, however, had become so disgusted with the activities of the opposition that he was no longer able to make a balanced assessment of the events he observed. In choosing the Jews for a scapegoat, he followed the inclination of many of his Viennese contemporaries. Yet it is interesting that a man of Aehrenthal's cultivation and political acumen, when faced with a highly distasteful reality, should alter his judgment so drastically within four years.

* * * *

C. Kinsky[1] *to His Excellency Count Goluchowski, etc., etc., etc., from St. Petersburg,* 15/2 *May,* 1902.

Right Honourable Count!

The Russian Empire is everywhere in ferment. Unrest and apprehension prevail in all classes.

This applies equally to labour, students, the nobility including the highest court society, industrialists, merchants, shopkeepers, and, last but not least, the peasants. The motives that come into play are often different, and even conflict with each other, obscuring the cause of this general movement that henceforth cannot be underestimated. Nevertheless, the attentive observer of political developments is led to one conclusion: the old Russian mode of government can no longer be adapted to the course of development upon which most of the Great Russian people have embarked, and things can no longer go on in this way, regardless of whether it will be possible in the near future to put down the present unrest.

The problem of finding a remedy is, however, extremely difficult, considering the prevailing conditions and the national character with which all officials and peasants are imbued. The only proven method of dealing with this situation, which is often proposed abroad, is the granting of a constitution; if this were done here, the consequence would certainly be revolution. And no one talks about a constitution here; I do not know that anyone demands one.

It is therefore necessary to find other remedies.

Up to now the desire for reform by those in authority has manifested itself only in personnel changes and in vague, incoherent reports. A few days ago the director of the press department of the Ministry of the Interior, Prince Schakovskoi, was dismissed, as was Prince Mirski, the commander of the gendarmerie. Mr Swolanski, the director of police under the Ministry of the Interior, as well as General Kleigels, chief of police in St. Petersburg, are also, so I have heard, soon to be dismissed.

[1] C. Kinsky was an attaché serving in the embassy under Aehrenthal. I have included Kinsky's dispatch in this selection because it is more detailed than any Aehrenthal himself wrote on internal questions at this time. Kinsky wrote it, of course, in the name of the embassy and his views accurately reflect those of Aehrenthal.

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Even the position of His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich as Governor-General of Moscow seems to be very much in jeopardy; but that of General Trepov, the director of police there, seems to have been consolidated.

The decisive reasons for the personnel changes are so characteristic of the very unusual and clumsy behaviour of these government officials, who are no doubt well-intentioned and eager to act in a just and liberal manner, that I hope Your Excellency will forgive me if I take some of your time and briefly describe two striking incidents. These will, moreover, also give a very clear picture both of the national character and of the practices of government organs, which the highest authorities here have to reckon with.

The first incident had to do, above all, with the Grand Duke's attempt to detach the workers from the students. To this end, he suggested to the former that they elect a committee to formulate, without help from any outside influences, their complaints and wishes; *but* at the same time the workers were to name all those agitators and other persons who urged them to stage illegal demonstrations. As soon as the workers' committee was organised, the most urgent task assigned to it was to provide the names; and once he [the Grand Duke] had this weapon in his hands, he used it against the families of almost all Moscow students. As a consequence—so I was told in all seriousness—policemen who did not want to count or could not count, simply arrested 2,000 guilty or innocent people and without further ceremony deported them.

The second incident, for the authenticity of which I can fully vouch, has become a sensation in the eyes of the public because the main participant was a foreigner, a French businessman who could not be bullied.

A considerable number of workers of a M. Goujon, director and co-owner of a large silk spinning-mill in Moscow, were on strike, as a result of incitement by agitators. For several weeks the police officers there gave provisions to the strikers, including the agitators; finally they asked M. Goujon to pay their protegés their salaries for the time they had been on strike.[2] In response to his refusal to do so, which was in accordance with the law, the Moscow police resorted to all possible chicaneries and threatened to close the factory; but M. Goujon, who was not inclined to be treated according to Russian custom, secretly went to Petersburg during the night in order to ask the Marquis de Montebello [the French ambassador] for protection. The matter was cleared up here, and in government circles there is no doubt that it will not be M. Goujon but rather General Trepov who will get the worst of it.

Moreover, one also hears of minor government and private employees being murdered by peasants in remote corners of the Empire; for the sake of maintaining peace and calm these incidents are not investigated. One hears of young people, even relatives of members of our colony, who are

[2] These workers were probably organised by the police in accordance with the principles of Zubatov, who headed the Moscow branch of the Defence Section (Okhrana) of the Department of Police. Zubatov thought it possible to control the political orientation of workers' organisations by having the police take the initiative in their formation and exercise leadership over them. His policy failed to satisfy the workers and antagonised employers.

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suddenly picked up by gendarmes in the middle of the night without any further word concerning their fate. And we hear other stories, too. I mention all this only as further evidence to show the utter confusion in which the administration of justice finds itself here, despite all the experience that has been acquired in such drastic ways recently.

The different motives that underlie this general ferment ought logically to bring about an assessment of the entire problem of reform from a variety of aspects. But the Russian constitution is such that there is no responsible, united cabinet of ministers which, by taking into account the points of view of the different departments, could work together and develop a common programme which would lay down guidelines to be followed by the various branches of the administration. Instead, the only centralised authority is in the hands of a weak young Emperor, under whom there prevail divergent systems, conceptions, and tendencies, and quarrels, strife, and intrigues among the different departmental ministers. The Vatican has a similar structure with its State Chancelleries, the Propaganda and Jesuit orders; but whereas within these individual units there exists the tightest form of organisation, in Russia confusion is growing apace in all departments right down to the lowest levels. Clear direction and unified will are lacking, and so it came about that under Tsar Alexander II, whose government made fumbling attempts to rule in a liberal spirit, the discontented national movement burst into flame; Alexander III, with his rigid but [*sic*] unbending will, managed to crush it; however, under the high-spirited but obviously not strong-willed Tsar Nicholas II it has come to the surface again. But it is now universally believed that this time the problem has become somewhat different because of recent internal developments in the Russian Empire and that henceforth good will alone, without simultaneous and appropriate reforms, will not suffice to maintain the Russian state structure in equilibrium for any extended period.

There is talk of creating a united council of ministers under the direction of Mr Witte.[3] But opposed to this idea are those who fear the exercise of too much power by a man who is, in any case, already too powerful. Moreover, on the basis of his previous career and activities, the Minister of Finance is regarded as the incarnation of the principle that all public functions should be subordinated to the executive power and the bureaucracy.

. . . The one reform which is clearly in order here and which the agitated masses most want, in addition to the elimination of the arbitrary judicial system, is granting the *zemstvos* the right to administer their finances.

The Russian state machine feeds on the people and in return it grants them rights only sporadically and then in an entirely arbitrary and irregular way. Hence there is universal 'anomie' in the Empire. A nation that is only half-conscious of itself must have the feeling that in return for its material, spiritual, and physical contributions to the state, it can expect honest and proper protection of its rights and interests.

[3] Count S. Yu. Witte (1849–1915) was Minister of Finance from 1894 to 1903, during which time he introduced policies designed to promote Russian industrialisation. One of the most able of Russian bureaucrats, he played a prominent role during the Revolution of 1905.

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Without some remedy along these lines it will hardly be possible to solve the problems of this country, which, as has been shown, are made even more difficult by the national character of the people.

Permit me, Your Excellency, to express my deepest respect.

C. Kinsky.

L. Aehrenthal to His Excellency Count Goluchowski, etc., etc., etc., from St. Petersburg, 24 *July*/6 *August* 1904.

Right Honourable Count!

The personality of Pleve and all the circumstances surrounding the terroristic act [4] give the newest move of the terroristic party against the autocratic principle an added importance. Among Tsar Nicholas's advisers the murdered minister was the most energetic and exercised some influence, if it is at all possible to say this of anyone under the present Tsar. He was the very embodiment of the bureaucratic spirit, which he had begun to acquire in masterly style from his teacher, Count Tolstoy. The almost exclusive concern with police and criminal matters at the beginning of his career left the most marked traces on Pleve's development. Despite his undoubtedly great talents he was unable, first as state secretary for Finland and in his last years as Minister of the Interior, to free himself from the police habits which had become second nature to him.

Although equipped with a superior will power, Pleve himself was by no means unaware of his deficiencies. When he visited me two years ago, shortly before his appointment, he frankly confessed that he was not sure he possessed statesmanlike qualities in sufficient measure to grapple with the enormous difficulties that he would have to face in this critical period in Russia. He clearly did not possess these qualities; for he hoped to exorcise the general discontent through the gradual introduction of reforms designed to remove the unsound features of the peasant organisations and provincial administrations. He either did not understand or was not courageous enough to tell the Tsar the following truth: that in Russia it was necessary, first and foremost, to try to bridge the chasm between the bureaucracy and ' society ' [5] by increasing the authority of the *zemstvos*. Pleve did the opposite, for he reprimanded many leaders of the liberal Russian nobility. The deceased substantially compounded the difficulties because, in addition to his treatment of internal problems and the Finnish question, he unnecessarily complicated the Armenian question in the Caucasus by his violent action; and through his inconsiderate handling of the legislation concerning Israelites, he aroused the Jews of the entire world against him. In attempting to struggle against all these opponents he overestimated his powers, particularly in a government under Nicholas II, who not only is unable to establish his authority over his officials but has already managed, quite frequently, to disappoint and startle them. Pleve had the feeling, so I have heard, that he had

[4] V. K. von Pleve (1846–1904) became Minister of the Interior in 1902 and immediately embarked upon a reactionary course. His goal was the russification of all minorities within the Russian Empire. He was assassinated in July 1904.

[5] At the turn of the century the word ' society ' was a synonym for ' liberal movement ' or ' enlightened public opinion '.

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adopted a lost cause. In both the Finnish and Jewish questions weak attempts had recently been made to initiate reforms, but these, of course, could not have any effect. Pleve received countless letters threatening him and if these could not intimidate the brave man, they did engender in him a foreboding of death and an understandable sense of insecurity.

I have little to add to the details already known about the terroristic act. The identity of the assassin has apparently still not been established. So far he has refused to give any information; his wound is not serious. The newspaper reports of a second bomb, that was thrown into the Neva, are correct. During the disposal of the bomb an individual was arrested and his name is known; hence it was possible to expedite the investigation. The latter is supposed to live in Homel and to have a markedly Jewish appearance.

Altogether three bombs are said to have been prepared. Since the Minister of Justice, Muraviev, has also received numerous threatening letters, it is assumed that the terrorists had planned to strike against him. The arrests and other pieces of evidence seem to have led the police to a committee that resides abroad. This information, given to me by Count Lamsdorff [Foreign Minister] and other ministers, may, to a certain degree, be correct, as the different revolutionary parties in Russia have numerous representatives abroad. Still, even though the police have considerable evidence that the leadership lives abroad and despite the countless trials and overcrowded prisons, it must be admitted that the authorities have not been able to crush the revolutionary cells within the country.

People who saw the Tsar on the day of Pleve's murder told me that His Majesty received the shocking news very calmly. I have often heard it said that the Tsar's nature is in general such as to exclude the expression of strong emotions. Once the Supreme Lord has adopted an idea or developed antipathies to people he clings to these with great firmness—some say, rather, with obstinacy. . . .

I was prepared for a cool assessment of Pleve from Count Lamsdorff, who was not on good terms with the murdered minister. Nevertheless, a genuine surprise was in store for me. Barely twenty-four hours after the terroristic act Count Lamsdorff, with startling candour, critically analysed Pleve's activities in the tone of a man filled with a sense of moral relief at the disappearance of an inconvenient and uncongenial colleague. In this respect the Minister of Foreign Affairs is at one with Witte—whose chance of coming to power again deserves to be taken more seriously. Should this happen, the position of Count Lamsdorff would be strengthened at the same time.

The latter began by saying that he hardly knew Pleve. He reminded me of earlier conversations, in which he had unequivocally criticised the policies of the Minister of the Interior. This was especially true of his impetuous behaviour in the matters of the Armenian Church and Finland. Since their union with Russia the Finns have acted as loyal subjects, for example during the Crimean War. The Finns cannot be reproached for maintaining that this loyalty was extended not to the 'Tsar' but rather to the 'Grand Duke of Finland'. Count Lamsdorff was especially censorious of Pleve for having been the Tsar's toady. An opportunist

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through and through, the deceased told His Majesty only agreeable things. Such behaviour must be regarded as criminal, especially since it was directed at a young ruler; and it is all the more inexcusable because Tsar Nicholas allows his advisers to speak freely. The minister spoke at some length on this subject and with satisfaction substantiated his point by informing me that Tsar Nicholas had never been offended at his speaking the truth, even though he often did it very vigorously. That this is the case is surely gratifying. But on the other hand it was surprising to hear from a minister [i.e., Lamsdorff] who pursues a mistaken and fateful foreign policy against his own better judgment that Nicholas II wants a frank assessment of conditions and takes this into account when formulating policy.

Most of Pleve's colleagues would express themselves about him more or less in the same way as Lamsdorff. I know several high officials in the Ministry of the Interior itself, among them the present administrator of the department, Mr Durnovo, who did not agree with the repressive policies of their chief, but nevertheless continued to serve under him

The most striking aspect of the present situation is the total indifference of 'society' to an event which constituted a heavy blow against the principles of the government. One could hardly have expected sympathy for a minister who because of his authoritarian bent must have made many enemies. But at a time when the dismissal of the highest state functionaries is being effected with an unusual degree of ruthlessness, a certain degree of human compassion, or at least concern and anxiety with respect to the immediate future, would be natural. Not a trace of this is to be found. Up to now I have found only totally indifferent people or people so cynical that they say that no other outcome was to be expected. It is as though 'society'—the court circle included—does not feel affected, does not sense that Pleve was murdered because the Tsar appointed him guardian of law and order. It can be said that practically all strata of the educated population in Russia regard the government's struggle against the revolutionary opposition with total apathy, if not with *Schadenfreude*. There is, moreover, no real hope for a change in the system; people are prepared to say that further catastrophes similar to Pleve's murder will be necessary in order to bring about a change of mind on the part of the highest authority. Very characteristic of the point of view of the Russian intelligentsia is the campaign for the establishment of a *united cabinet* begun by the publisher of *Novoe Vremia*, Suvorin. . . . There is no reluctance publicly to expose the inadequacy of the present mode of government and it is significant that in the last resort this criticism is directed against the person of the Tsar, who is incapable of centralised and effective direction of the affairs of state.

Personally, I have lost in Pleve a minister with whom I had the most cordial relations and who was always prepared to take our wishes into consideration. Your Excellency knows from my reports how sympathetically the deceased regarded the monarchy and how very convinced he was of the necessity of close relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia. Pleve had the same friendly relations with my German

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colleagues. In foreign policy he thought it in Russia's interest to aim for the establishment of a good relationship between the three Emperors. Pleve was often accused of duplicity, but Count Alvensleben [the German ambassador] and I were in a position to check on his communications and we were never able to discover any contradiction or deception. Pleve's distinctly cool relations with the French embassy is further indication that his sympathies for Austria-Hungary were not hypocritical.

The organs close to Mr Witte earlier reproached Pleve for being partly responsible for the outbreak of the Japanese war. I have already dealt with this accusation and concluded that it was unjustified. According to my information, the deceased did not want the war, which was bound to complicate the internal situation. Opportunism may have prevented him from responding to the inquiries of an irresolute man with sufficient clarity concerning the consequences of a [Japanese war]. But it remains doubtful whether it would have been possible, even if Pleve had joined Count Lamsdorff in his attempts to dissuade [the Tsar from his course], to have induced Tsar Nicholas to adopt more conciliatory policies.

Permit me, Your Excellency, to express my deep respect.

L. Aehrenthal.

L. Aehrenthal to His Excellency Count Goluchowski, etc., etc., etc., from St. Petersburg, 22/9 October 1904.
Confidential

Right Honourable Count!

Recently I had a not uninteresting talk with one of the higher functionaries of the Ministry of the Interior who, although of liberal persuasion, administered an important department under Pleve and Sipyagin.[6] My informant gave a very unfavourable assessment of his murdered chief. This opinion is not unique. . . . Concerning the assassination itself, I received confirmation that the police have not found any accomplices other than the two who were directly involved. The man who threw the bomb on the Ismailov Prospect is named Sazonov. It has now been established that the Jew, who wanted to sink a bomb in the Neva while the assassination was being carried out, clearly intended to intervene if Sazonov had not succeeded in murdering the minister. My informant, who is in a position to know all about the very secret investigation, asserted that Pleve was not the victim of an ingenious conspiracy with numerous ramifications. The countless dissatisfied people within Russia and abroad unite under the influence of special circumstances, that is, from case to case, to form a terroristic group. There is no evidence to suggest that there exists a disciplined organisation of the revolutionary party, as was the case at the end of the 70s and beginning of the 80s.

My informant foresees a black future; he knows no branch of the Administration that is free from general corruption. The bureaucracy has, according to him, mismanaged completely; in the welter of the

[6] D. S. Sipyagin (1853–1902) was Minister of the Interior from 1899 until 1902, when he was assassinated by a Socialist-Revolutionary.

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mass of official documents the truly vital Russia has been forgotten. Now there is a search for this vital Russia. The so-called educated classes, whose wishes should definitely be respected, are unprepared for participation in public affairs. Nevertheless, there is nothing that can be done except to take a resolute step forward.

My informant is in general agreement with the views of Prince Svyatopolk-Mirski.[7] He described him as an upright and well-intentioned man who will honestly and sincerely aim to improve conditions. It is easy to govern the Russian people if they are approached with good will. For a long time they have been severely neglected. Nevertheless, my Russian friend does not appear to be very confident that Prince Mirski will be successful. He told me that he [the Prince] is easily subject to personal influences.

My informant condemned the policies which led to the Japanese war as extremely foolish and contrary to the true interests of Russia. From the beginning Russian diplomacy made one mistake after another and was based on an underestimation of the opponent; unfortunately, Russians are given to such underestimation. They have convinced themselves that they are much superior to the foreigner, but the opposite is true. Despite the long duration of the war and the severe defeats, there is even today no clear understanding in government circles of the situation that has been created by the war. They still labour under illusions, and the person who wants to combat this tendency is immediately branded as a false Russian, practically as a traitor. As there is little chance for a change in this situation, the assessment of my informant of what the future holds in store was very pessimistic; there is nothing to be done except to brace oneself for a long duration of the war.

My informant does not believe that revolutionary incidents within the Empire will be sufficient to put the Petersburg Government in a pacific frame of mind. This is not to say that he contends that there will not be isolated revolts of workers and peasants here and there, which has happened frequently in recent years. It is very fortunate that this year's harvest is a good one, and hence there is no need for concern that complications may arise as a result of economic distress.

This assessment of the domestic situation in Russia is in accord with my other observations. I regard as impossible the emergence of a 'popular movement' in Russia on the model of the Western European revolution. If the war continues to be waged for a long time in the same disastrous way as heretofore, the danger of some reaction on the part of the embittered nation would undoubtedly become a reality. But then the revolt against the Tsar would certainly assume a genuinely Russian character and, as indicated, would not follow the pattern of the European revolutionary movements. Personally, I should like to express the sincere hope that developments both on the Manchurian battle scene as well as within Russia will prove the pessimistic outlook I have presented to be false. As a neighbour and in a certain sense an ally of Russia, we

[7] Prince P. D. Svyatopolk-Mirski (1857–1914), Pleve's successor as Minister of the Interior, wanted to follow moderate policies and initiate an 'era of confidence'. He relaxed the censorship and allowed *zemstvo* representatives to meet and discuss issues of common concern.

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ourselves would suffer from a weakening of the monarchical principle in the tsarist Empire.

I should like to add the following to my remarks concerning Prince Svyatopolk-Mirski: if the minister attempts to pursue a liberal reform policy, as he has promised, then he will have to replace some of the most important governor-generals. Grand Duke Sergei in Moscow, General Cherkov in Warsaw, and Prince Golitsyn in the Caucasus represent the reactionary system that has existed up to now. The basic tenet of their creed is that tsarist absolutism is unthinkable without maintaining Russian nationalism and Orthodoxy as the pillars of the governmental system. For more than twenty years these have been regarded as the cure for Russia. There is no question that the old Russian party denounces every deviation from this political system—which from the standpoint of logic is a just one—as a threat to the Empire and to the dynasty. There will be bitter struggles over principles between advocates of the inflexible system inaugurated by Pobedonostsev and Tolstoy[8]—and terminated, for the time being, by the death of Pleve—and liberals such as Svyatopolk-Mirski.

It is said that the political influence of the Grand Duke Sergei has declined sharply, if it has not disappeared completely. Still, as long as the Grand Duke occupies an important post in Moscow the Minister of the Interior will have to reckon with him, and not as a friend.

Permit me, Your Excellency, to express my deep respect.

L. Aehrenthal.

L. Aehrenthal to Count Goluchowski, etc., etc., etc., from St. Petersburg, 17/4 *December,* 1904.

Right Honourable Count!

When, at the beginning of the Mirski era, the press made unrestrained use of the freedom it had been granted, I heard it said that this was happening because the Russian journalists knew only too well that the long-awaited political spring would be of brief duration. There might be some justification in holding this view. But far more justified is the reproach directed at the press that its unrestrained language proved in the crassest form that the Russian intelligentsia was unprepared for this freedom. The most elementary sense of discretion was disregarded, so that recently the gentle Prince Mirski himself was forced to reprimand several newspapers.

The urge to criticise prevailing conditions manifests itself among all the upper strata of the Russian people. After the representatives from the provincial *zemstvos* had done so, the lawyers here and in Moscow raised their voices and on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the legal reforms passed resolutions in which they complained that legal practices now in effect diverge from the fundamental premises of the

[8] K. P. Pobedonostsev (1827–1907) was Procurator of the Holy Synod from 1880 until 1905 and the philosopher of Russian conservatism. He exercised considerable influence over Tsars Alexander III and Nicholas II. Count D. A. Tolstoy (1823–89), also an extreme conservative, was Minister of Education from 1866 until 1880 and Minister of the Interior from 1882 until 1889. As Minister of the Interior, he tightened the censorship and strengthened the police.

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reforms of 1864.[9] The government also showed very little skill in handling this demonstration, for it denied the lawyers use of the building in which they usually meet. The consequence of this annoying prohibition was that the participants in the meeting went to the hall of the City Council, which was nearby, and without asking permission . . . held their deliberations there. I should like to point out that it is typical of such proceedings—as was true of the conferences of lawyers and of chairmen of provincial *zemstvo* boards—for meetings to be held *in private; political* resolutions are adopted and then submitted to the Minister of the Interior, who accepts them!

As another sign of the times, it is worthwhile mentioning that, as in France in the 60s, lawyers use the court-room to air political questions. This tendency manifested itself at a recent trial for slander of Prince Meshcherski,[10] in which a Moscow attorney assumed the pose of a Russian Mirabeau.

After the demonstrations by provincial 'society' and the legal profession, the students also did not want to lag behind in demonstrating their 'confidence' in the new era. Faithful to their bad traditions and motivated by even worse instincts, students from different universities staged these peculiar demonstrations of loyalty in the streets. The gentlemen do not seem to realise that by acting in this manner they do not serve the cause of progress in Russia. These senseless demonstrations—during which youths armed with sticks and the *Kursisten* [11] who accompanied them were easily overpowered by the gendarmerie and the mobilised *portiers*—suggest both great naïveté on the part of the organisers and the existence of a very inflammatory mood that must somehow vent itself. As was mentioned in the government's communiqué concerning Sunday's disturbances, the demonstrators unfolded red flags and distributed inflammatory leaflets among the public. But the characteristic political opinions of the young people were concealed: they called for an end to the war and, in the same breath, asked that restaurants be kept open till 4 o'clock in the morning! Thus, no talk of doing one's duty; rather, carousing and silly declamations about the Russia of the future!

On Monday students demonstrated again and then marched to the Admiralty and shouted hostile slogans there. Demonstrations were also to be held on the occasion of the trial of the murderers of Minister Pleve and therefore many precautions had to be taken. Thanks to these measures it was not difficult to disperse the workers who last Tuesday assembled before the courthouse on Liteinya Street. The co-operation between workers and students of radical persuasion as well as other bits of evidence the police have found suggest that the machinations of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party are behind all this.

Pleve's murderers have received the following sentences: forced labour for life for Sazonov, who actually committed the crime, and 20

[9] The major judicial reforms were trial by jury for all criminal cases and the introduction of public court proceedings. From the 1880s on the government frequently side-stepped these procedures by resorting to administrative methods of dealing with those it considered politically dangerous.

[10] V. P. Meshcherski (1839–1914) was editor of *Grazhdanin*, a conservative paper with a strong bent for scandal.

[11] *Kursisten* were female students at institutions of higher learning.

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years forced labour for the accessory to the crime, Sikorski, who sank a bomb in the Neva on the day of the assassination. In part, the lightness of the punishment is to be explained by the fact that this case was tried by a ' regular ' and not by an extraordinary military court; only the latter has the legal right to inflict the death sentence. It seems, however, that even this sentence is considered much too severe. The tribunal itself appears to have taken into account extenuating circumstances and is said to have mentioned the possibility of recommending that Imperial mercy be extended to the condemned. If I were to add that the public, with few exceptions, considers the terrible crime, which cost not only the life of one of the Tsar's leading advisers but also of a sizeable number of other people, as an ' act of deliverance ', then I will not have exaggerated the prevailing mood here.

The orgies celebrated by the unchained Russian democracy in the press and at meetings naturally throw the representatives of the reactionary party into deep sorrow and genuine anxiety. They are witnessing the collapse of an edifice laboriously built over twenty years and are convinced that if the time should once again come when the government acts with vigour, it would no longer be in the form established by Pobedonostsev. The supporters of the latter are, one by one, leaving their posts. Prince Golitsyn, who is so despised in the Caucasus, has personally said to the Tsar that ' he [the Tsar] does not have the courage to send the Prince back to a post which is especially exposed to the public view '. The equally unpopular Grand Duke Sergei has, according to rumour, applied for retirement from his position as Governor General of Moscow. Whether His Imperial Highness will remain there as commander-in-chief of the troops is apparently still to be decided. It is quite certain that Lieutenant-General Cherkov wants to retire to private life after the war. There were already profound differences of opinion between him and Mirski while he [Cherkov] was in Vilna. It is impossible to maintain a system of government that wants to be friendly to Poles and Jews here [in St. Petersburg] while keeping down the same elements in Warsaw with an iron Muscovite fist.

For the present the Tsar's confidence in Prince Mirski is unshaken. The minister is pleased to have the support of both Tsarinas, who assume that a liberal course offers better guarantees for the personal safety of the Tsar than a police regime. Much can be said for this point of view. On the other hand, it is striking that since Pleve was removed from the scene the threatening letters sent directly to the Tsar have increased to a disturbing degree.

Prince Mirski himself does not feel that he has the complete support of his Imperial Sovereign, who lets him do as he pleases, but who, as has happened so frequently, could once again come under the influence of elements opposed to the present course. The minister should count on this and be prepared, at any moment, to give up his troublesome post. Persons who have frequent contact with him have assured me that he is fully convinced that despite all sorts of impediments the path of progress must be followed. He gives the impression of a man who, though without a clear and carefully considered programme, is strongly moved by the simple feeling that change is indispensable and has managed to give

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currency to the *mot d'ordre* that Russian ' society ' has adopted. He may be guided by the French dictum: *à chaque jour suffit sa peine.* The task now is to make a breach in the old system. If the wishes of the sickly Prince are taken into account, the rebuilding of the system will be left to other, stronger hands.

In the camp of the minister's friends the opinions concerning the *quid faciendum* differs widely. Prince Vasilchikov, a wealthy man with many excellent connections, formerly Governor of Pskov, was supposed to become Mirski's adjutant. It may also have been intended to prepare him for the post of Minister of the Interior. Last summer Vasilchikov was, together with Mirski, one of the Tsar's candidates. So far the appointment has not been made. It has been asserted that Vasilchikov expects the Tsar personally to take up with him the question of his entering the ministry. Others believe that the person here named considers it necessary to establish free institutions in Russia proper, but would like to exclude them from the border territories. Vasilchikov regards Mirski as much too friendly to the Poles and Jews. Apparently, then, a contrast is emerging between a narrow and a broad type of liberalism. . . .

I have just been told that Prince Mirski has mustered up some energy and has refused to receive the delegation from the meetings of lawyers in Petersburg and Moscow, where political resolutions were adopted, on the ground that the meetings overstepped the bounds of their legal competence.

Permit me, Your Excellency, to express my respect.

L. Aehrenthal.

L. Aehrenthal to Count Goluchowski, etc., etc., etc., from St. Petersburg, 25/12 *June,* 1906.

Right Honourable Count!

The city of Bialystok in the province of Grodno (about 70,000 inhabitants, of whom threequarters are Israelites) has, because of recent events, become notorious.[12] It is not simply the traditional racial hatred between Jews and Christians that produced the regrettable outbreak there. Something more is involved: and that is the exploitation of the bloody incidents by the revolutionary elements for a new assault against the government.

As an objective observer, I would not want to vouch for the government's presentation of the facts in its *entirety.* The investigation has not been completed—but it can already be said that it will turn out that the frightening reports in the revolutionary press here and abroad were grossly exaggerated. The repeated intercessions by the Jewish Deputy Vinaver with the Minister of the Interior to ask for military protection for the Jewish population are evidence enough to refute the assertion that the troops and the authorities in general promoted the excesses or even initiated them. Had this been the case, the Deputy Vinaver would

[12] One of the severest pogroms in Russian history took place in Bialystok on 1–3 June 1906. Seventy Jews were killed and ninety seriously wounded. A commission of inquiry set up by the Duma placed responsibility for this outburst on the local police.

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surely not have been at such pains to enlist the help of the Minister of the Interior. Information received from Russian as well as Polish sources suggests that the cause of the assault on Jews is to be sought in the following circumstances: the attack by revolutionaries on the Corpus Christi Day procession, the throwing of bombs (the latter is even admitted by the Kadet paper, the *Duma,* with the naive assertion that the bomb did not contain canister shot but *only powder*), and the exasperation of the Christian population with the Jewish terrorists, who for almost two years have spread fear throughout the land. In Bialystok, as in other western cities, there seem to exist Israelite *druzhinas*, organised on a military basis, that have fought with the troops. In the city mentioned above, as well as in neighbouring Grodno, the Jewish 'Bund' has been engaged in feverish activity. Consequently, there has been no shortage of gunpowder in Bialystok.

From a general political standpoint, it is very instructive to observe how squeamish the Duma is when the lives of Israelites come into question. It seems as though they [the Deputies] use two different yardsticks. The countless victims of the terroristic movement arouse absolutely no sympathy. In his recent, very noteworthy speech in the Duma the Minister of the Interior presented some statistical material which speaks more eloquently than long commentaries: from October 1905 until 20 April 1906, 288 civil servants, policemen, and gendarmes, etc., were murdered and 383 wounded, while 156 assassinations were attempted but failed. The Duma has shown as little sympathy for these people, who were discharging their sacred duties, as for the innocent victims of assassination, of which there are only too many. The Kadets have not uttered a single word of condemnation about the gruesome incidents in Sevastopol.[13] Similarly, the Duma has remained indifferent to the catastrophe in Madrid,[14] which is understandable considering the dominant mood there; the Duma is interested only in the *one-sided* abolition of the death sentence, so that the work of social revolution can be carried out more quickly and thoroughly.

The cry of indignation that burst forth from the foreign press and the interpellations about Bialystok that were made in the various European parliaments are further evidence of the ties between the extremist parties in all countries. The speeches of the Deputies Adler and Breitner,[15] among others, are identical in tone with those of Vinaver, Herzenstein, Levin, all members of the Duma. Regardless of whether the speech is given in Vienna or in St. Petersburg, the refrain is always the same: if you don't comply with my wishes, then I shall use force!

One other point deserves to be made with respect to Bialystok, namely, the prominent role of the Jewish question in the Russian Revolution. Today the struggle is no longer for the elimination of long-standing evils, for bringing new blood into the state service, or even for

[13] Aehrenthal was no doubt referring to the mutiny on two warships in Sevastopol in November 1905. In crushing the mutiny troops destroyed a part of the city.

[14] The reference is probably to the attempted assassination by an anarchist of the King of Spain on 31 May 1906. Although the King was not injured, the bomb thrown at the royal carriage killed fifteen persons and wounded seventy.

[15] V. Adler (1852–1918) was the founder and leader of the Austrian Social-Democratic movement; H. Breitner (1873–1946) was a prominent member of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party.

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the exercise of effective control over the government by an elected assembly. The Tsar and even most representatives of the *ancien regime* have accepted such reforms and are prepared to reconcile themselves to new conditions. But the majority as well as the minority in the Duma want to seize all the power and would be prepared to give it to those whose first act would be to pay off their debt of gratitude to the Jewish citizens for their distinguished service during the Revolution. To put the Jews—who, at a conservative estimate, number 7—8 million people—on an equal footing with the other citizens, most of whom are at a very low cultural niveau, would be tantamount to handing the tsarist Empire over to the *Alliance Israelite*[16] Then there would no longer be any sense to having a Zionist movement; the chosen people would once again have their own state! But I am no less convinced of the total Judaisation [*Verjudung*] of Russia in the event of a victory of the Russian Revolution, than I am of the indispensability of introducing changes in the unbearable conditions that prevail in the western provinces, which are inhabited by Jews. But what measure could be taken in this direction? The Russian bureaucracy has shown itself incompetent to deal with this problem. The Duma, on the other hand, would, with the radical solution it has formulated,[17] destroy the Russian Empire as we know it; this would be similar to the Caesarian section which sacrifices the mother for the sake of the child! The question is, whom does one decide to save?

Permit me, Your Excellency, to express my respect.

L. Aehrenthal.

L. Aehrenthal to Count Goluchowski etc., etc., etc., from St. Petersburg, 22/9 September, 1906.

Right Honourable Count!

. . . Belief in the victory of the Revolution from *below* is beginning to disappear and the view is emerging that the improvements that have been achieved[18] will be lost only if those *in authority* once again act from weakness or stupidity. But it is to be hoped this will not happen.

The big banking houses of Europe, which have a large stake in the stability of Russia, to a certain degree ought morally to support the attainment of this goal. This support would consist in the exercise of influence over the big daily newspapers in order to get them to cease their unconditional defence of the activities of the Russian revolutionaries. This alliance is explained by the spoils of victory hoped for by the so-called freedom movement, which has long since been transformed into an anarchistic or communistic orgy. Essentially, the issue is now the complete emancipation of Jewry in Russia. As events have shown with increasing clarity, this goal cannot be realised with the

[16] The *Alliance Israelite*, founded in 1860 in Paris, was an organisation devoted to struggling against anti-Semitism.

[17] The 'radical solution' discussed by the Duma was the granting of full rights of citizenship to Jews.

[18] i.e., the containment of the revolutionary movement, which was being achieved by Stolypin, appointed Minister of the Interior in 1906.

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weapons of the terroristic revolution. The improvement in the conditions of the Jewish people as well as their *eventual* equality with other citizens can already be regarded as a *résultat acquis* of the developments of the last few years—provided that the intransigent Jews disarm and give the Russian state an opportunity to embark upon a course of reform. Continuation of the terroristic movement, which would quickly collapse without aid from international Jewry, would undoubtedly be answered by new acts of repression on the part of the Russian masses, who have been greatly provoked and totally brutalised by two years of revolution. Thus, more attacks on Jews, plundering, murder, *in definitum*. I think the Jewish people in Russia would be better served if they were to adopt a moderate, realistic attitude towards Russian conditions, rather than indulging in bombastic and systematic abuse of the Imperial Government, in part directly contrary to fact. The newspapers in Vienna and Budapest could think about this matter, for it is never too late to change. Such a change would be to the interest of the big financial institutions. . . . So far as I know, large financial enterprises and businesses are doomed to collapse if, in the state in question, all authority is undermined. In Russia this undermining is done by the European press, which completely forgets that victory of the social revolution in Russia is synonymous with great financial loss for the capitalist world in Western Europe.

Permit me, Your Excellency, to express my respect.

L. Aehrenthal.

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Contents, Vol. XVII, No. 1 (October 1964)

Toward Controlling International Change: A Personal Plea .. Ernst B. Haas
Bomber Disarmament ..... Jeremy J. Stone
Patterns of Language Planning in the New States ..... Jacob Ornstein
Society, Economics, and Politics in Contemporary Turkey . Kemel H. Karpat
ONUC's Civilian Operations: State-Preserving and State-Building
Harold Karan Jacobson

Research Note

Approaches to the Study of Political Development .. Robert A. Packenham

Review Articles

Rationalizing NATO Strategy ..... Malcolm W. Hoag
Inter-American Politics: Limited Thoughts on the Unthinkable
Daniel Goldrich
Toward Further Modernization of the Study of New Nations
Manfred Halpern

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VIEWS AND REVIEWS

MAXIM GORKY'S CORRESPONDENCE

Victor S. Frank

THAT REMARKABLE SCHOLARLY TEAM IN MOSCOW, the editorial board of the series *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* (published by the Gorky Institute of World Literature, Academy of Sciences of the USSR), have devoted their latest volume to Maxim Gorky's correspondence with Soviet writers.* It contains 521 hitherto unknown letters from and to Gorky, and covers the period 1903–1936.

The professional standard of the publication is as high as usual, but the volume is also marred by grave defects, obviously caused by political considerations. Thus, with the exception of one passage,[1] Gorky's leading part in the joint enterprise of prominent Soviet writers in 1933–1934, the publication dedicated to the successful completion of the White Sea-Baltic Canal (the first instance of the mass use of forced labour for industrial purposes), is not reflected in the volume. Nor is Gorky's visit to the Solovki camp in the summer of 1929 mentioned, although on both occasions, particularly in 1933, Gorky must have written scores of letters to his fellow writers.

The second major defect is the fact that the letters are arranged not in an over-all chronological order, but in the alphabetical order of the names of Gorky's correspondents. This system utterly confuses the flow of events. A coherent picture emerges only if one compiles a chronological key and reads the letters not in the sequence in which they are presented, but in the order in which they were written.

The material itself, however, is highly relevant. One of the most important themes on which the publication sheds more light is Gorky's baffling mutation which turned a defender of human life and liberty into a worshipper of brute power in the shape of OGPU officials. How did it happen?

In September 1927 Boris Pasternak sent a copy of his epic poem in praise of revolution, *The Year 1905,* to Maxim Gorky at Sorrento and inscribed the book: 'To Alexey Maximovich Gorky, the greatest expression and justification of the epoch, with respectful and deep love.' In a letter of 10 October of the same year Pasternak explained more clearly what Gorky meant to him and to many of his contemporaries at that time: 'I wonder what would have remained of revolution, where its moral truth would be, if there had not been you in Russian history. Without you, both as an individual of flesh and blood, and as a gigantic tribal type, its [the revolution's] sham and vacuity become only too apparent' (p. 297).

Since early in 1922 Gorky had been staying abroad, in a self-imposed

* **Gorky i sovetskie pisateli.** Neizdannaya perepiska. Literaturnoe nasledstvo. Vol. 70, Moscow, 1963, 736 pp.

1 Gorky to Prishvin, 28 April 1934, p. 361.

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ambiguous exile, first in Germany and Czechoslovakia and then, from 1924 on, in Sorrento and Naples. To the young writers inside Russia—most of them 'fellow-travellers' (*poputchiki*) in the original Russian meaning of the term, i.e., people of 'bourgeois' background painfully groping their way towards a reconciliation with, and a possible acceptance of, the new order of things—Gorky's attitude and the mere fact of his existence were of an overriding importance. Gorky was the only writer with a major pre-revolutionary reputation who, after a period of vacillation, had wholeheartedly espoused the cause of the Bolshevik régime. To the young 'fellow-travellers'—Pasternak, Slonimsky, Kaverin, Leonov and others—Gorky appeared to embody the radical tradition of their fathers, the Russian intelligentsia.[2] If Tolstoy's and Chekhov's younger friend, and a great writer in his own right, was willing to bless the new regime—so these writers appear to have argued—then the regime, whatever its revolting aspects, could not be basically wrong. That, I think, is the explanation of Gorky's magnetic power and Boris Pasternak's extraordinary feat, the promotion of Gorky to the rank of an historical phenomenon providing the sole justification of the epoch.

Humanly speaking, Gorky certainly deserved the unstinted admiration and gratitude of all Russian writers. His fearless and effective philanthropic activities during the terrible years of 1918 to 1922, when his unflagging endeavours saved scores of writers and scholars from certain death by bullet, hunger, or typhoid fever, were generally known. So was his paternal attitude to all writers, young and old, sophisticated or naïve, during his years of exile. Personally, Gorky was a good man, with no trace of malice or envy in his make-up, endowed with a vigorous and even flamboyant kindness. In a curious way, even Gorky's exile benefited his pro-Soviet image. His prolonged stay outside Soviet Russia enabled him to keep up his pro-Bolshevik attitude without becoming involved in the unedifying squabbles and moral compromises which would have been his lot in Russia. As the Russians say, he managed both to remain a virgin and to amass a fortune.

In May 1933, the exile came to an end. After paying visits to Russia in 1928, 1929, 1931, and 1932, Gorky returned for good. But a few months later, in August 1933, something happened which must have radically changed Gorky's image in the minds of people like Boris Pasternak. The editorial board of the publishing house 'History of Factories and Industrial Works', which had been founded on Gorky's initiative, and in which Gorky played a leading part, decided to produce a book on the completion of the White Sea-Baltic Canal.

The completion of construction was a political event far transcending the problematic strategic and economic importance of the waterway itself. The project was a departure in the penal practice of the regime: For the first time, a major project had been entrusted not to an economic agency, but to the OGPU and, in particular, to Genrikh Yagoda, nominally its deputy chief, but actually in charge. In April 1931 the

[2] In Pasternak's case there was an intimate personal link. The poet's father, the artist Leonid Pasternak, knew Gorky well and even worked with him in the stormy months of 1905 on two revolutionary satirical magazines. See B. Pasternak, *An Essay in Autobiography*, London, 1959, p. 53.

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OGPU began to prepare blueprints for the canal, and in November construction was begun. The strategic purpose was to connect the Arctic and Baltic Seas in order to enable the Baltic Fleet to reach the White Sea directly through Russian waterways. In the case of war, it was argued, the Russian Navy in the Baltic would be sealed in by Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, or by England, but would be free to reach the oceans from the White Sea.

The number of working prisoners, including high-ranking engineers, reached almost 300,000 at its peak. On 2 August 1933, in the initial phase of the second five-year plan, less than two years after the work had been started, the canal was proclaimed completed and given the name of Stalin. Throughout the Soviet Union the opening was celebrated as a tremendous achievement. Seventy-two thousand prisoners were amnestied.

On 17 August 1933, 120 Soviet writers led by Gorky went on a tour of the canal and of the camps located along it. As a result of this trip, a sumptuous de luxe edition, a symposium entitled *Belomorsko-Baltiisky Kanal imeni Stalina*: *Istoriya stroitelstva*, appeared on 2 January 1934 in Moscow. The three joint editors were M. Gorky, L. Averbakh, and S. Firin. (Leonid Averbakh, one of the most rabid extremists among the writers fell from grace shortly afterwards and perished in 1938. Semyon Firin was a leading Chekist, Chief of the White Sea-Baltic corrective labour camps system and Deputy head of the Corrective Labour Camps Division of OGPU.)

Contributors to the volume included Yevgeny Gabrilovich, Korney Zelinsky, Mikhail Zoshchenko, Vsevolod Ivanov, Vera Inber, Valentin Kataev, Dmitry Mirsky, Lev Nikulin, Viktor Pertsov, Aleksandr Tikhonov, Aleksey Tolstoy, Viktor Shklovsky, and Bruno Jasenski. Of these, two, Mirsky and Jasenski, were to perish in the camps a few years later, while Zoshchenko died in disgrace after the war. The crowning irony was, of course, that Gorky himself was to die in mysterious circumstances in 1936, while Yagoda, who ranked second only to Stalin in the volume, was shot in 1938.

The volume edited by Gorky gave prominence to a government decree awarding decorations to 'officials, engineers and senior staff of the *Belomorstroy* who had particularly distinguished themselves'. The long honours list opened with the names of recipients of the Order of Lenin, among them Genrikh Yagoda and seven other prominent professional policemen and engineers (some of the latter, ex-prisoners employed by OGPU).

In his own contribution Gorky wrote: 'This [the construction of the Canal] has been a highly successful attempt at a mass rehabilitation of enemies of the proletarian dictatorship and of the Soviet social system and their transformation into skilled assistants of the working class and even into enthusiastic supporters of work needed by the State. The policy of corrective labour initiated by OGPU . . . has once again justified itself. For the first time, this system of re-forging (*perekovka*) has been applied so daringly and on such a vast scale.'

WHAT IS THE EXPLANATION OF this re-forging, *perekovka,* of Gorky himself? Was the main reason really his political naïveté, as Dallin and

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Nicolaievsky suggest in their work *Forced Labour in Soviet Russia*? He was—they wrote—a strange mixture of great literary talent and childish naïveté. Almost until his death, he wanted to believe that the avowedly terroristic Soviet regime was in the process of establishing a community of human brotherhood (p. 242).

I think that Gorky's case is more complex and, moreover, that it possesses an importance transcending Gorky's personal characteristics. The key to his mutation may, I think, be found in his correspondence with Konstantin Fedin in the winter of 1926.

Fedin, then a man of 34 and a rising star among Soviet novelists, had just read a Berlin collection of Gorky's short stories which were new to him. Under the impression of the book, he wrote to Gorky on 16 January 1926: 'I must confess, I had to think of myself; I realised that I am not endowed with your active love of man. I am good only at compassion; admiration comes rarely to me and is usually shortlived. I always resent a magnificent, beautiful, intelligent and, no doubt, useful thoroughbred, but a wretched good-for-nothing jade moves me deeply. In short, I have resigned myself to the probability that to the end of my days I will love only the pathetic and the unneeded.' [3]

Gorky responded to his young friend's letter at once. On 28 January he wrote: 'I was very interested in what you had to say of the thoroughbred which you resent, and of the "good-for-nothing jade" which moves you. This [attitude] is very ancient and very Christian. Turgenev's *Mumu*, Gogol's Akaky Akakievich and other "jades"—well, we don't need them any more. They are treacle incapable of sweetening the bitterness of our life, a putty incapable of concealing the deep irreparable cracks in the fabric of the modern state.' [4]

Fedin's reply is dated 11 February: '. . . Misfortune [of others] always attracts me. Good fortune, power, conquests leave me cold. Freaks, lunatics, holy fools (*yurodivye*), hysterical women (*klikushi*) torment me. . . . You may be right about *Mumu* and Akaky Akakievich; of course, there is something ancient and Christian about them. But, after all, isn't the whole of our art (I leave aside the art of the ancients for which I do not care) essentially Christian? Is it not remarkable that King Lear's tragedy consists not in the loss of his kingdom, but in the loss of his daughters? Surely, this is *The Living Relic* all over, compassion, pity, Christianity. . . . And I am convinced that while Akaky Akakievich has really *educated* the Russian reader, Gladkov's *Cement* is not likely to educate anyone'.[5]

Gorky reacted to this remarkable profession of faith of a Soviet writer with a militant definition of his own creed: 'I am a hater of old

3 P. 499. 'Active love' means, I think, Gorky's idea that the only people deserving love are the strong 'doers', and that by loving them one may help them to change the world.

4 P. 502. 'Christian' was a term of opprobrium to Gorky. *Mumu* is Turgenev's story of a deaf-mute serf whose pet dog is destroyed at the *barynya's* orders. Akaky Akakievich is the humble hero of *The Overcoat* 'from beneath whose flaps the whole of Russian literature emerged', as Dostoevsky once said.

5 P. 506. *The Living Relic* is Turgenev's short story about sufferings transfiguring a human soul. Gladkov's *Cement*, the first Soviet novel to place its main emphasis on industrialisation, was a best-seller at the time both in the Soviet Union and abroad. Gorky disliked Gladkov's novels.

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of suffering, both physical and moral. Suffering of both kinds, viewed subjectively and objectively, brings forth in me feelings of indignation, revulsion, and even hatred. Suffering must be hated; only in this way can it be destroyed. It humbles Man, a great and tragic being'.[6]

Gorky was a self-avowed humanist—in the sense that he rejected every notion binding man to an order of things higher than himself. There was nothing in the universe to him that deserved interest outside of man. In another definition of his creed he wrote: 'I am a geocentrist, an anthropocentrist and an anthropomorphist. I am very much aware of *my* Earth as the centre of the universe, and of man as the main essential miracle on earth. . . . Seriously, there is nothing around us more astounding and more unfathomable than we ourselves' (p. 342).

Yet the main driving force of Gorky's 'anthropocentrism' was not love or compassion as in Fedin's case. Strangely enough, the one correspondent who guessed the inner core of Gorky's 'humanism' was the hysterical, vain, complex-ridden Gladkov. 'You talk a lot about man, about your love of man'—he wrote to Gorky on 7 August 1927—'I suspect, however, that you do not love men, that you despise them and sneer at them' (p. 97).

That is perfectly true. Gorky's main motivation was undoubtedly a naturalist's curiosity. It is sufficient, for instance, to read a collection of diary notes and memoirs published by him in 1924,[7] to realise that underneath the vigour and the gusto lies contempt and even despair. People inhabiting Gorky's world are not human beings; they are cruel, bored, and absurd freaks. They may be entertaining or even interesting from a pathologist's point of view, but they are certainly not lovable. And why should they be? Gorky was honest enough as an artist to see that man, taken in isolation from anything transcending him, is something contemptible. So Gorky's 'humanism' which did not grow out of worship of the god-like nature of man (as it did with the Renaissance humanists), but was a mechanical outcome of a revolt against God, was bound to turn into its opposite, into a Nietzschean contempt for man in his present state.

Hence also Gorky's pathological hatred of everything weak and suffering. Shortly before his death he wrote a curious letter to Zoshchenko (p. 166) which deserves to be quoted extensively. He praised Zoshchenko's new book and went on: "You know, Mikhail Mikhailovich, it would be grand if you furnished us with a similar book on the subject of suffering. No one has ever dared to ridicule suffering which constitutes the main trade of many people. No one has ever felt that suffering is something loathsome. Sanctified by the religion of the "suffering god", it has played the first violin in history. . . . Suffering is a disgrace to the world, and one must hate it to eradicate it. . . . To laugh the professional sufferers out of court: there is a good deed for you, dear Mikhail Mikhailovich.'

Zoshchenko's reply—if it was ever written—is not printed in the *Literaturnoye nasledstvo* volume. To 'laugh professional sufferers

[6] In a letter of 3 March 1926, printed in full in M. Gorky, *Sobranie sochinenii*, Vol. 29, p. 457. Cp. p. 507 of *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, Note 5. Gorky spelled man with a capital 'M', and God with a small 'g'.

[7] *Zametki iz dnevnika. Vospominaniya*, Berlin, 1924.

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out of court' may or may not be a proposition in good taste in a sated decadent society. In the hungry and fear-ridden Russia of 1936 it was indecent.

One must not misinterpret Gorky. His 'hatred of sufferings' (and of 'professional sufferers', which is even worse!) was not, of course, motivated by personal cruelty. It was a natural outcome of his rejection of all religion and his concentration on man. 'I believe only in man—he wrote to a correspondent—only in him: that is the long and the short of my religion' (p. 641). But man, as he is now, was to Gorky a loathsome insect, cruel and selfish, motivated by lust and greed. So man must be overcome and transformed into something else. And since man himself is far too stupid even to desire this transformation, he must be transformed by force.

It is at this juncture that we begin to understand why Gorky was attracted by the power aspect of Bolshevism. Force, power, physical compulsion contained in his view the only promise of man's salvation.

In the spring of 1933 he wrote to Aleksey Tolstoy, another power worshipper: 'The [May Day] parade was astounding. I am completely shattered by the beauty and the sheer brute power [*silishcha*] of that day!' (p. 409).

So Gorky's brand of humanism led him naturally into praising Yagoda and the system of corrective labour camps: the concept of a violent re-forging of 'anti-social elements' into builders of a new life fitted neatly into his general philosophy of man.

The 'god-shaped vacuum' in Gorky's humanist heart was filled by Genrikh Yagoda! A horrible, but perhaps not an inexplicable mutation.

PLATONOV

Pierre Forgues

IN AN ARTICLE IN *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (27 August 1963), Vasili Aksenov wrote: 'the young novelist ought . . . to re-read Tolstoi, Dostoevski, Gorki, Bunin, *Quiet flows the Don*, the novels of Leonov, *the works of Platonov*, Hemingway, and Faulkner. That is where they will find material for new researches'. Among all those great names, an unknown one—Platonov.

Trying to follow up this reference is a disappointing business: in the French edition of Struve's history of Soviet literature the name appears once only, on p. 340, in a six-page list of Soviet works published in France. In the monumental history of Soviet literature (2,000 pages in 3 volumes) published by the Academy of Sciences, the name again appears only once, on p. 586 of Volume III, in a long list of writers who were war correspondents at the front during the Second World War. Here we learn that Platonov, with Simonov, Surkov, and others, was a correspondent of *Krasnaya Zvezda*. This is not much. And yet Aksenov is not alone in praising Platonov up to the skies:

> The miracle, it would seem, is repeated so often it should no longer astonish us. But a miracle is a miracle; we cannot get accustomed

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> to it. . . . Ordinary words, written on ordinary paper. But all at once they fade away, and we are listening to the rustling of the trees; we see people walking, smiling and weeping. Platonov is a master (Shevelev in *Books and Opinions*, December 1963, p. 158). It takes a great master to be able, with such tact (and in art, tact is called taste), to combine such diverse elements of style with so natural and easy a manner (Gladkov in *Novy Mir*, November 1963, p. 231).

The occasion for this rather surprising enthusiasm was the republication, at the beginning of 1963, of a number of Platonov's short stories in an edition of 50,000 copies, with a substantial introduction by Dementiev.

Who was Platonov? Platonov was born in 1899 in an impecunious family of railway workers. He worked first as a manual labourer, then as a fitter. The Revolution enabled him to improve his education at the Polytechnic Institute. From 1918, he was regularly writing poetry, which he collected under the title of *The Blue Depths*. He left the Institute in 1924, and in 1927 published his first collection of tales, *The Floodgates of Epiphany*; in 1928 a second, *The Secretive Man*, and in 1929 a third, *The Birth of a Foreman*. One of the longest tales in this last collection, 'The Town of Gradov' is a violent satire on the rising Soviet bureaucracy. In 1929 his novel *Chevengur* was not accepted for publication, but in the same year he published a satirical story, *The Problems of Makar*, in the same vein as 'The Town of Gradov', and this was the target of much criticism. Criticism was intensified in 1931, the year of publication of his novel *A Tale of Poor Peasants*. After that Platonov fades out of the literary scene.

From 1933 until the war, he succeeded in getting only one novel published—*The River Patudan*, in 1937. In 1934 Gorki had forbidden the publication of Platonov's anti-fascist satire, *The Wind from the Muck-heap*. During the war he served as a correspondent at the front; from 1942 to 1945 he published three collections of war reports. In 1946, in *Novy Mir*, he published his best story, *Home Again*, better known under the title of *The Ivanov Family*. This story earned him a whole series of attacks, including a very violent one from Ermilov, who is notorious for his denunciations. The spate of insults from Ermilov put an end to Platonov's career. He disappeared entirely from literary life, and died in 1951.

The Ivanov Family depicts the post-war atmosphere and the problems of that period in a highly heterodox manner. A captain is returning home from the front. He lingers for two days with a girl whom he meets on the platform of a wrecked railway station. Arrived home, he learns that his wife has once deceived him. He cannot bear this, nor the sight of his son who, after four years, has become a self-willed and obstinate little fellow. He decides to go away again, and the next morning we see him in the train. But from his carriage he sees two children running and stumbling along the permanent way—they are his own. And just as the train is gathering speed, he jumps off.

This bald tale is simply told, unsentimental, low-keyed; indeed, somewhat dry and colourless, yet it grips one because the author's personality, humane and tender, if somewhat disillusioned, makes itself

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felt. Ermilov presents it as mechanical, crafty propaganda. He begins by attacking the author for explaining 'his hero's late return by pretending that the train was slow, whereas in fact our railways were in no way to blame'; he goes on:

> It seems that the author wants to explain Ivanov's indifference towards his son by his having lost the habit of family life in the course of four years of war. But it is difficult to imagine how such emptiness of soul could be found in a Soviet man—that is, a noble and healthy man.

The woman who once deceived her husband during those four years —and how miserable she was about it—is said to display monstrous coarseness of feeling . . .

> Cannot Platonov feel the blasphemous (*sic*!) character of this woman's reasoning when she mixes up the explanation of her infidelity with those conceptions which are sacred to every Soviet man—the education of children and the effort put into the struggle for the freedom of the Fatherland?
>
> Platonov has written a libellous account of our life, of our men, of our Soviet family. . . . The reader has had enough of Platonov's predilection for every pollution of the soul, his suspect passion for morbid situations and effects in the spirit of the worst 'Dostoevskism'. . . . Enough of the sort of 'foolishness in Christ' that characterises Platonov's writings! . . . Enough of this psychological Grand Guignol in the style of certain decadent schools. Enough of this taste for the horrible and obscene; a taste that has always been characteristic of the author of *The Ivanov Family*. . . .

Finally, Ermilov stigmatises the 'sexual cynicism', the 'sordid morals' of the story and its 'moral darkness', and concludes that:

> for Soviet man, the impure and monstrous little world of Platonov's characters is repugnant and hostile . . . (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, of which Ermilov was formerly editor-in-chief, 4 January 1947, under the heading: 'A Libellous story by Platonov'.)

Gladkov makes a rather discreet allusion, in *Novy Mir*, to the persecution of which Platonov was a victim:

> Platonov was often reviled during the early thirties, in the middle thirties, in the middle forties, and he was seldom published, but he could not stop writing (p. 233).

IS THE WORK OF THIS MAN with the sad and gentle face republished now only because he was persecuted, or is it really a precious legacy, of value to Soviet writers of today? The most obvious characteristic of the stories in the volume published last year is their remoteness from socialist realism—in the characters they introduce, in their manner, their atmosphere, and their tone. There is nothing didactic in them, no lesson in morals either contrived or, worse still, natural, as in one of the better novels by Simonov, or by Ehrenburg after 1930. Platonov's heroes know nothing of any ideology. They may sometimes recall characters in Chekov by their apparent sadness and the feeling they give one, that the world is

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too much for their simplicity; but with a few minor exceptions, Platonov's characters are never puppets, and they hardly excite pity: their naïvety or their indolence gives them a sort of natural strength and confidence, which however have nothing to do with the virtues known by these names, and enforceable by decree, in a Stalinist novel. These characters are endowed with a deep sympathy for everything that exists. Platonov writes: 'Life cannot be boring or commonplace. It must be magical; it should be as children and adolescents sense it to be'.

The charm of these stories is born of the ordinary, the freshness of a childlike contact with things and with the world. Even when they are egotistic, hard, or bitter, these heroes are never set in a fixed pattern. Captain Ivanov jumps from the train at the last minute to go to his children without having taken time to reflect. There is no scene-setting either grandiose or flatly realistic, as in Stalin-prize work.

Platonov is not a social novelist. He is interested in individuals, who are never stereotypes. These beings are all different; but all are animated by a more or less unconscious will to happiness. That is the case with the five boys in his novel *The Third Son*. Their mother has just died, they have come to the funeral, and in the paternal home they feel, rising within them little by little, joyful recollections of their childhood; they play and laugh. So it is with *Fro*, a strange young woman who wants only to vegetate. Her husband is not satisfied with this way of life, and has left her to build communism in the Far East. In desperation, after a few days she has a telegram sent to him with false news of her death. He comes back. They spend whole days in bed. Fro wants nothing more. One morning she wakes up and her husband has again departed for the Far East. It is that will to happiness which drives the young Persian slave in *Takir* to kill her master and then flee, and also drives the young schoolmistress, lost in the desert, to carry on a hard fight against the sands, depicted with a lyrical tenderness that never rings false (*The Schoolmistress of the Sands*). Children take happiness for granted, and that is why Platonov so often makes them the heroes of his stories. In *Storm in July*, for instance, where two children pay a visit to their grandmother, to eat pancakes. When they get there they feel bored and go away again. A storm overtakes them. At last they reach home. In this story without a subject Platonov succeeds in evoking the Russian countryside and in portraying two children without once giving us the impression of a gratuitous exercise of style or of triviality. This novel, and *Fro*, are without doubt the best expressions of that joy in living which all Platonov's heroes bear within them.

Why is it, then, that in spite of our pleasure in reading works which stand out so clearly from the dreary diurnal flood of Soviet literature, we feel both dissatisfied and a little surprised when critics talk of a 'miracle' and place Platonov between Dostoevski and Faulkner?

First of all, it is because Platonov always stays on the surface of his characters. He is not much of a psychologist; he does not analyse his characters. He depicts them by their behaviour, by little touches added one by one; but they remain a little thin, a little too transparent. They pass through our minds without staying in our memory. When we

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have closed the book they dissolve: charming or touching beings, and always true, but they cannot instal themselves in life.

And then, Platonov's style is so flat. His dry, short sentences are only now and then brightened by a happy phrase. They trail along in the narrative, very like one another, without much relief. The sentences are as insubstantial as the characters. Platonov's work as a whole seems like sketches for works which might be, a succession of promises which are only very imperfectly fulfilled. The stories string together tenuous passing glimpses which cannot organise themselves into a fresco.

Gorki once wrote to Platonov: 'You write with force and brilliance'. It is an appreciation of the same order, no doubt, that impels Aksenov to speak of Platonov as a master to be studied. Gladkov, too, expands into dithyrambic praise of the 'Platonov style'. And, in comparison with the spaghetti-like sentences, flabby and involved, that are common to Soviet writers and the communiqués of the Central Committee, Platonov's style may well strike one by its conciseness, its limpidity. But Nekrasov's writing is no less transparent. Over and above the economy of his literary style, what Platonov can bring to the Soviet writers of today is a sense of the inexhaustible beauty of the world, a firm will to happiness, and a certain tender and melancholy smile, which he refused to give up for the exhilaration of power and adulation of greatness. So that he sets an example of intellectual courage.

DEN POEZII

R. Milner-Gulland

THE LATEST OF THE ANNUAL VOLUMES *Den Poezii* (Day of Poetry)* comes in a dust-jacket which is a masterly piece of typography; indeed the whole work deserves praise (as do last year's separate Moscow and Leningrad editions) as being far above the normal Soviet standard of book-production. Inside, the contents are a cheerful muddle (haphazardly arranged and inadequately indexed)—mostly of recent lyric poetry by known and unknown writers, but also including verse-cycles, critical articles, notes, reviews, memoirs, polemics, letters, obituaries, parodies, translations, and scholarly research.

Anyone with a concern for modern Russian poetry must have awaited this volume with trepidation. Since 1956 the series has fulfilled a double role: it has been the primary mouthpiece and measure of a vigorous revival in Russian poetry, and it has led the important process of 'rediscovery' of a brilliant heritage—particularly in the experimental poetry of the 1910s to the mid-1930s—which Zhdanovism tried to suppress. (It has resurrected the work of fine poets who died in disgrace or neglect: Tsvetaeva, Mandelshtam, Khlebnikov, Oreshin, Pavel Vasil-yev, Boris Kornilov.) With the single exception of Tvardovsky, every worthwhile poet publishing in Russia has contributed to it, from survivors of the oldest generation (Pasternak, Akhmatova, Zabolotsky, Aseyev,

* **Den Poezii 1963**, ed. by M. Lukonin and others, Moscow, 1963, 292 pp. 15s.

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Antokolsky, Tikhonov, Marshak) to the 'new wave', for most of whom it early provided a mass readership (in 1956: Slutsky, Vinokurov, Yevtushenko; 1957: Akhmadulina; 1958: Voznesensky; 1960: Tsybin; 1962: Sosnora, Okudzhava). Quality has fluctuated, the editorial board has varied each year, but the tradition of a spontaneously organised forum—for writers of all Soviet literary tendencies—has been maintained. It is a relief to find, despite the menacing phase of cultural reaction a year ago, that *Den Poezii 1963* upholds this tradition.

The 1962 volumes had been the most exciting since the 1956 one. That of 1963 does not quite reach this high standard, but comes near to it. The chief comparative deficiency is in the field of literary criticism, particularly reviews (mostly dull and over-laudatory towards unimportant authors). One also regrets the absence of contributions this year from two poets who have done much for *Den Poezii* in the past: Kirsanov (Mayakovsky's disciple and truest heir) and Yevtushenko (rumour reports an upset with the editors); and the non-appearance of certain Leningraders—maybe they are preparing their own edition—and of a few promising young writers (Morits, Matveyeva, Yevseyeva, Sosnora). Otherwise all the hoped-for names appear, and none (save perhaps Bokov) disappoint.

The star of the 1963 volume is undoubtedly the 75-year-old Anna Akhmatova; the eight pages of her *Poem without a Hero*, written and reworked between 1940 and 1962 (and published in an earlier version in America), are the subtlest and finest poetry of all: formally striking, charged with allusive, transmuted, half-mystical emotion. She is the queen of Russian women poets, who (as Vanshenkin points out) are playing a remarkable role in Soviet literature today. Her most gifted successor—nearly fifty years younger—is Bella Akhmadulina, represented here by extracts from a long poem, *My Genealogy* (published fully in *Yunost*), which like all her work shifts dazzlingly about the border-lines between humour and pathos, fantasy and crude realism, allusiveness and baroque rhetoric. Other interesting women poets represented include Tushnova, Zvyagintseva, Lisnyanskaya, and an apparent new discovery, Natalya Burova: her two twenty-line poems have a verbal gusto and a sensuous, half-frightened delight in nature which recall Pavel Vasilyev.

Three short poems by Voznesensky confirm him as a poet of European importance—more buoyant, sparkling, and technically sure than ever. *Mayakovsky in Paris* reveals how deeply the *real* Mayakovsky (not Stalin's posthumous poet-laureate) is entering into the consciousness of young Russia. *Polish Lessons* is a delightful, sardonic, elliptic conceit. But undoubtedly *Latvian Saga* will attract most attention: both for its remarkable subject (a Latvian who tries to escape to the West in 1941 and is betrayed) and its form—a true 'saga' in three parts, incredibly compressed to twenty-five breathless lines.

Among other established names Martynov's contributions (including a delightful evocation of Ovid) are notable; the still-underrated Slutsky, Vinokurov, Soloukhin, Tsybin, and Rozhdestvensky are good (the last provides a truly Mayakovskian love-poem). Scarcely satisfying fare is provided by veterans of less auspicious epochs who have found their way into the volume: Bezymensky, Gorodetsky, Surkov, and Dolmatovsky (these two in rambling jottings). Vasilyev's gratuitously malevolent

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epigrams contrast sharply with one of the gems of the book—parodies of seven of the leading ' new wave ' poets by Yury Levitansky, extremely funny but lovingly sensitive, in fact creative (like all good parody).

The bulk of the remaining poets are less well known and many of them make an uninspired showing. Meretricious Soviet writing has only a single virtue: that it is transparently easy to spot, lacking the sophisticated gloss of second-rate Western literature. Contrary to expectation, the enemy here is unexceptionable dullness rather than (say) offensive political propaganda (for a peculiar exception, see Suslovich, who finds inspiration in the Berlin Wall). But among the sub-Georgian insipidities of the little-known poets one sometimes comes across an unquestionable spark of poetry: a feel for what language can do. Iodkovsky strikes such a spark from the unpromising subject of Soviet teletype messages, Lystsov from the richness of Russian peasant nomenclature. Dense, thoughtful, detailed poetry (like some of Vinokurov's and Yevtushenko's) breathes through the verse of Dmitriev, Korinets, and Ozerov. And no categories fit Bulat Okudzhava; better known as a *chansonnier*, he brings true poetry to his serio-humorous fantasies, like a latter-day A. K. Tolstoy: his *Kuznechiki* here ends magnificently.

Den Poezii ends with a section titled *Pamyat* (Memory), containing some important critical material. The true Mayakovsky comes into focus again in a speech delivered by the ill-fated Meyerhold in 1936, backed up ably in an article by Paperny (and less ably by the veteran poet Zharov). A letter from Bryusov to Sluchevsky is published for the first time. Vera Inber remembers Bagritsky (a fellow-Odessan), and Martynov resurrects a forgotten and promising poet, Vivian Itin. Andronnikov provides a long investigation into the literary world of the early 19th century, based on the rediscovered notebooks of V. I. Annenkova. But the crown of this concluding section is a short chapter from a forthcoming book of memoirs by Chukovsky. In it he gives a rare glimpse of his friend Zabolotsky—one of the great poets of the century—and of the stubborn philosophy of metamorphosis through death that coloured all his work.

If poetry is the most hopefully flourishing of the arts in the USSR today, thanks are primarily due to *Den Poezii*. The 1963 volume may contain plenty of dross, but the ore is as valuable as ever. One day these books will be collectors' items.

USSR, UN, AND THE THIRD WORLD

Rosalyn Higgins

DR RUBINSTEIN'S OBJECTIVE in analysing the attitude of the Soviet Union to international organisations is specific: to assess the success of Soviet policies towards the developing countries. His book* is therefore concerned with the posture of the Soviet Union (and to a lesser extent, its

* **The Soviets in International Organisations—Changing Policy Towards Developing Countries.** 1953–1963. Alvin Z. Rubinstein. Princeton U.P. 1964.

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communist allies) and with the response of the African and Asian nations. He concentrates on the post-Stalin era though the historical lessons of 1945–53 are summarised in an introductory chapter. The sterile arguments in ECOSOC over the economics of unemployment, the controversy over the attempts to establish an International Trade Organisation, and Soviet hostility to the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (ETAP), are all accurately recounted.

After the death of Stalin, however, the CPSU discarded some of his policies, and a Soviet courtship of the underdeveloped countries began in the United Nations, its organs and agencies. The unexpected announcement by the Soviet delegate to the sixteenth session of ECOSOC, that his country would now contribute four million rubles to ETAP, intensified the fears of US Congressmen that ETAP would become a communist tool. The resultant cuts in the US budgetary contribution served to get the Soviets off to a better start than they could have hoped for. Dr Rubinstein traces Russia's progress in gradual participation in UN programmes, with the 'two camp' thesis being rejected by the twentieth CPSU Congress in favour of the 'zone of peace' concept. The wooing of the neutrals could now be justified ideologically.

The author provides four case-studies of Soviet policies: the UN Special Fund, the World Health Organisation, volunteer workers in technical assistance programmes, and the financing of economic development. The first two of these are especially well-presented, and the complexities of Big-Power rivalry in the SUNFED affair and the International Health and Medical Year emerge very clearly. Dr Rubinstein remains as perplexed as most other students of UN matters over the anomalous position of the Ukrainian Republic and the Byelorussian SSR in the WHO.

There are excellent chapters on Soviet policy towards the developing countries in the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) and in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The author contends that the Russian overtures of February 1954 led to a new line of thinking among ECAFE delegates, who now began to hope that the cold war could be translated into a competitive economic struggle between the two blocs for the favours of the developing countries. It remains true, however, as Dr Rubinstein points out, that Soviet bilateral technical assistance has been preferred by the neutrals to Soviet assistance channelled through ETAP and ECAFE. In the IAEA India has emerged as a strong voice among the non-aligned nations, and here Soviet policies have been more successfully attuned to the aspirations of those countries than in ECAFE. Tensions between the Soviet Union and the IAEA secretariat continue, with the non-utilisation of Soviet funds—paid in non-convertible rubles—a constant source of friction. Nonetheless it is difficult to disagree with Dr Rubinstein's assessment that, to an extent unparalleled in any regional commission or Specialised Agency, the Soviet Union has in the IAEA succeeded in estranging the West from the neutralists. Soviet and neutralist positions on the major issues have largely coincided.

The last three chapters, while interesting in themselves, stand uncomfortably apart from the rest of the book because, although they concern various aspects of Soviet policy, they fail to focus on objectives pursued in the under-developed countries. The chapter on Soviet personnel in

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international secretariats, while correctly tracing the attitudes which led to the attack on Hammarskjold and the abortive demands for a ' troika ', has little material that is relevant to the wooing of the developing nations; nor does a section on ideology and behaviour, in itself convincing, relate directly to the central theme. The same may be said of the chapter on the image of the UN which the Soviet Union presents to its own citizens. Occasionally the genuine difficulties facing post-Stalin Russia are inadequately acknowledged. The author is sometimes inclined to impute improper motivation a little too readily.

In analysing Soviet policy and its effects on the developing countries, Dr Rubinstein is in fact drawing two sides of a triangle. The third side of the triangle is United States policy, competing frequently for the support of the neutrals. This aspect, of necessity, is only sketched in, and a certain lack of balance results. But this is a very good book, containing original insights and a wealth of material, well presented, which will be useful to students of international organisation and sovietology alike.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Derek J. R. Scott

THE CHARACTER OF ANY STUDY of a political system from outside is determined by which of two possible obsessive visions seizes the author—the strangeness of foreigners' purposes or the similarities of the techniques available to any exercise in human cooperation. Professor Hazard, proceeding from a central interest in the law, is of the latter persuasion, and throughout his book* he stresses the analogies with American practices. Even for non-Americans this has made his work, originally published in 1957, one of the most accessible in its field. That it has now reached its third edition testifies both to its acceptance and to the transience of things Soviet under Khrushchev. That in fact this edition proves not to be very different even from the first testifies to the permanence of the general spirit of Soviet politics which the author seeks to interpret.

It is with spirit and approach rather than with the details of contrivance that he is concerned, and since contrivance has throughout been a large part of Soviet politics, especially when, as now, recourse to naked force is less readily available than in the period of high Stalinism, something is lost. Mr Hazard presents the Soviet system as a democracy-machine coupled to the power of popular demand but restrained by judicious application of ' counter-weights ', but he does not seek to show in detail the forces operating in each part of the system or how the mechanism responds to shifts in their relative strength. The question of what, apart from its own continuance, the system is to be made to effect—and how, and why it does not—is not very fully considered. Demonstration that there is a real legal system operating, that the characteristic

* **The Soviet System of Government.** By John N. Hazard. University of Chicago Press (Chicago & London, 3rd ed., 1964). pp. x+282. 41s.

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American political activity of arbitrating between interests has here an analogue of sorts, is perhaps the distinctive Hazard contribution to Soviet political studies. The un-American phenomenon of the state as a business, with problems of management of familiar kind but unprecedented magnitude and power uniquely unconfined, is less deeply explored. The constant changes in areas, responsibilities, subordinations, and career prospects of the operators hardly appear to disrupt the elegance of the account. The great insoluble problems of what to do about agriculture and how to measure economic success and failure, the characteristic juggling which results from realisation, sometimes alternating and sometimes simultaneous, both of the power which possession of the party apparatus confers and the danger of allowing it to settle down as an estate of the realm, count here for rather less than their full value.

This edition owes its growth of nineteen pages of text over the original version mainly to the occasional inserted sentence or paragraph. Only the sections on the role of the military in politics, the experiments with local autonomy, and the advance of the intellectuals, which the author sees as the main phenomena of the Khrushchev era, have needed extensive rewriting. For the rest the original analysis stands.

The federal constitution, as amended to 1 January 1964, and the rules of the Party, in the XXII Congress (October 1961) version, are again given *in extenso* in an appendix. Their relevance to the situation described in the text is not likely to be readily apparent to the less informed reader, and some commentary seems called for. Especially, a book published in 1964 might be expected to draw attention to the fact that, even in Soviet theory, substantial structural changes—effected by the November 1962 plenum of the Central Committee—lie between the 1961 rules and present practice. The bibliography, always good, is now, by expansion, better.

It is in the nature of a selective account that not all have agreed, or will agree, with the author's selection, but if the Russia presented seems somewhat more reasonable than that which emerges from its own press, we may perhaps attribute this equally to the systematising vision of the legal eye and to the scrupulous fairness of American students of Soviet affairs; for this, in view of the magnitude of their stake in this field of scholarship, we have good cause to be grateful.

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INDUSTRY IN EAST EUROPE

Evelyn Anderson

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow

THESE LINES MIGHT WELL have served as a motto for Mr. Zauberman's study.* Its emphasis throughout lies on the very wide gap between the theoretical concept of overall planning and its practical execution in advanced industrial countries.

Because of its origins, communist economic planning has been mainly studied as a particular method devised to industrialise backward agrarian societies. Yet, among all the countries under communist rule, only the highly industrialised area of Central Europe—Czechoslovakia and the eastern part of Germany—at least approximated the conditions which, according to Marxist (if not Marxist-Leninist) concepts, were sufficiently advanced for the construction of a higher socialist order. In any investigation of economic progress under communist rule it makes excellent sense, therefore, to single this area out for special attention, as Mr. Zauberman has now done. His study also includes Poland even though it is only semi-industrialised. This, as the author explains, is warranted partly by Poland's size and geographical position, but mainly by its control over the industrial centre of the region—the greater part of Silesia.

It is not possible in a brief review to do justice to the great amount of learning, information, and thoughtful original comment which has been packed into this comparatively short study of a highly intricate subject. For a book addressed to the general reader it suffers, perhaps, from a surfeit of details and critical analyses, but if this does not make for light reading, it has the great virtue of avoiding facile generalisations and of conveying something of the enormous complexity of the economic problems of the area.

Mr. Zauberman is concerned with three main groups of inter-related problems—planning techniques and the planners' strategy; the degree of material progress achieved in both quantitative and qualitative terms; and, finally, the development of the three countries' foreign economic relations. He discounts the official claims concerning industrial growth as grossly exaggerated, but his own calculations lead him to the conclusion that, at least in the initial period, it was nevertheless considerable in all three countries. He tends, however, to think that advanced industrial societies inevitably develop such a multitude of economic factors which defy both anticipation and precise calculation that it becomes next to impossible to maintain the initial rates of growth by

* Alfred Zauberman, **Industrial Progress in Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany 1937-1962.** Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. Oxford University Press. 1964. 50s. 338 pp.

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means of the established planning techniques. In all three countries under review the pace of expansion has in fact markedly slowed down in the more recent period, and the abandonment or repeated revision of plans has become the rule rather than the exception. In fact, Mr. Zauberman writes,

> the Central European test case seems to provide *prima facie* support for the thesis that once the initial break-through phase of industrial expansion is completed, it becomes increasingly difficult to plan and run a highly industrialised economy with the mechanism designed for the Soviet-type environment of four decades ago.

But he seems disinclined to believe that this trend could be reversed even if the planning techniques were greatly improved. His scepticism derives above all from the fact that this Central European area is, to a very high and growing degree, dependent on international trade which, as he rightly emphasises, is by its very nature one of the most uncertain and least 'plannable' sectors with which the national planner has to deal. He does not say it in so many words, but the unspoken conclusion to which all his facts and arguments seem to lead him is that in non-self-sufficient advanced industrial countries not even the most versatile planning techniques are ever likely to become an efficient substitute for the flexibility of the market regulator.

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SURVEY: Index Nos. 50—53, 1964

Author	*Title*	*No.*	*Page*
ADAMS, Arthur	The Hybrid Art of Sovietology	50	154
ARON, Raymond	The Great Schism: A Reconsideration	50	3
ASCHER, Abraham	The Coming Storm	53	148
BROMKE, Adam	Political Realism in Poland	51	111
BRONSKA-PAMPUCH, Wanda	Russia in German Eyes: 1964	51	93
BYRNES, Robert	USA: Work at the Universities	50	62
CLEVERDON, Cyril	Keeping the Scientists Informed	52	136
CONQUEST, Robert	In Defence of Kremlinology	50	163
COREY, Esther	Passage to Russia	53	23
CROAN, Melvin	Of Walls and Utopias	51	52
FEUER, Lewis	Meeting the Philosophers	51	10
FRANK, Victor	Soviet Studies in Western Europe: Britain	50	90
GAROSCI, Aldo	Palmiro Togliatti	53	140
GERSCHENKRON, Alexander	Study of the Soviet Economy in the USA	50	82
GOMEZ, Manuel	From Mexico to Moscow	53	33
GRAHAM, Loren	Cybernetics in the Soviet Union	52	3
GRIFFITHS, Franklyn	The Origins of Peaceful Coexistence	50	195
GRUBER, Helmut	Paul Levi and the Comintern	53	70
HACKER, Jens	Soviet Studies in Western Europe: Germany	50	107
HALLE, Louis	The Cold War Revisited	50	30
HAYTER, Sir William	The Meaning of Coexistence	50	23
HEALEY, Denis	Strategy and Foreign Policy	50	17
HINGLEY, Ronald	Osric	51	102
JAFFE, Philip	The Strange Case of Anna Louise Strong	53	129
JELENSKI, K. A.	Poland in Several Lights	51	131
JORAVSKY, David	Lysenko's Maize	52	91
KAMENKA, Eugene	Soviet Philosophy Through Western Eyes	50	129
KERBLAY, Basile	Soviet Studies in Western Europe: France	50	97
KUEBLER, Hans	Exchange Scientist in Leningrad	52	61
LABEDZ, Leopold	Soviet Studies, the Press, and the Public	51	87
LAQUEUR, Walter	In Search of Russia	50	41
LICHTHEIM, George	Western Marxist Literature, 1953–1963	50	119
LOVELL, Sir Bernard	Russian Plans for Space: An Interview	52	78
McCREA, William	Astronomy in the USSR	52	69
McINNES, Neil	Antonio Gramsci	53	3
MATTICK, Paul	The Marxism of Karl Korsch	53	86
MIKULAK, Maxim	Philosophy and Science	52	147
MILLER, Robert	A Good Kolkhoz	51	32
MOHR, Hans	Biologist in Moscow	52	100
MONTIAS, John	A Plan for all Seasons	51	63
MORRIS, Bernard	World Communism	50	146
NETTL, Peter	Rosa Luxemburg	53	48
NOVE, Alec	Uses and Abuses of Kremlinology	50	174

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Author	*Title*	*No.*	*Page*
O'CONNOR, Neil	Psychology: Trends Past and Present	52	125
REICHENBACH, Bernhard	Moscow 1921	53	16
RIGBY, T. H.	Cryto-Politics	50	183
ROAF, Robert	Medicine: Research and Public Health	52	108
ROBERT, David	Moscow State University	51	24
SCHLESINGER, Arthur	Coexistence vs. Peace	50	10
SCHURER, H.	Radek and the German Revolution	53	59
SEMENOV, N. N.	Prospects of Science	52	41
SENIOR, David	The Organisation of Scientific Research	52	19
SMITHERS, D. W.	Medicine: The Oncology Service	52	114
STEININGER, Alexander	Scientists in Soviet Literature	52	157
STENZL, Otto	Germany's Eastern Frontier	51	118
STERN, Gustave	In Memoriam—Alfred Rosmer	53	98
STRUVE, Gleb	Western Writing on Soviet Literature	50	137
SZPORLUK, Roman	Pokrovsky and Russian History	53	107
TURKEVICH, John	Chemistry	52	83
ULAM, Adam	USA: Some Critical Reflections	50	53
VERE-JONES, David	The Mathematician's Tale	52	52
WEIL, Irwin	Gorky and Others	51	3
WILES, Peter	Western Research into the Soviet Economy	50	69
ZANGWILL, O. L.	Psychology: Current Approaches	52	119

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

ACZEL, Tamas	Marginal Notes on a Journal	52	170
ANDERSON, Evelyn	Industry in East Europe	53	180
ASCHER, Abraham	The RSDLP	52	166
BROWN, J. F.	Albania	51	154
BRZESKI, Andrzej	The Advantages of Backwardness	51	148
CARSTEN, F. L.	The Paris Commune	52	174
FOOTMAN, David	Limited War	52	169
FORGUES, Pierre	Platonov	53	170
FRANK, Victor	Maxim Gorky's Correspondence	53	165
KAMENKA, Eugene	Soviet Dilemmas	52	167
KEEP, John	Father of Russian Marxism	51	145
KIRALFY, A. K. R.	Soviet Treaty-Making	51	152
LABEDZ, Leopold	The Sino-Soviet Rift	51	156
MILNER-GULLAND, Robin	Den Poezii	53	174
SCOTT, Derek	Government and Politics	53	178
UTECHIN, S. V.	Education	51	140
ZAUBERMAN, Alfred	Comecon	51	147

NOTES

DEDIJER, Stevan	International Comparisons	52	45
LÜST, Reimar	From an Astronomer's Diary	52	81
SHARP, D. H.	Information Services	52	138
STUDY GROUP	The Academy's Computing Centre	52	8
—— ——	Electronics	52	12
WIGNER, Eugene	Science in Two Worlds	52	22

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